

THE REVIEWER

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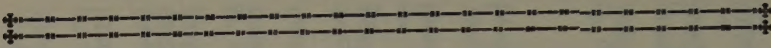
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THE REVIEWER

Vol. III

January, 1923

Nos. 7 and 8

The Treasure of the Humble

A Note on the Secret Glory

BY ARTHUR MACHEN.

The humble have many treasures; and one of the greatest of these is the gift of vision. I do not mean by this the vision of the higher kind, or the sight of those things which it is not lawful to utter, nor even that lower gift which enables the palmist and the astrologer to do some very astounding things every now and again. The vision I speak of has nothing to do with this or that; and yet we poor folk certainly are enabled to see the secrets of many hearts, and this *ex opere operato*; from the very fact of our humble condition. I have been in my day both a strolling player and a newspaper reporter. Neither occupation, I fear, is held in very high esteem, and thus from both careers I have been enabled to gather certain very choice observations. For example, soon after I joined the reporting staff of the London Evening News, I was sent to interview an old actor acquaintance, on his commencing manager. I often used to meet him in places of theatrical resort when I was playing at the St. James's Theatre in 1902-1904. He was always very pleasant, and he invariably told me of his great quarrel with George Alexander. I forget what the quarrel was about, but I know it contained the brisk incident of Alexander suddenly popping out of his brougham in Bond Street, and shaking his fist in the face of the astonished player who was sauntering harmless on the pavement of that pleasant western thoroughfare, thinking no evil. Well, I had listened to this tale so often that I felt that it was almost a link between us, and years afterwards

when the interview with the manager was "assigned" to me I was pleased at the opportunity of renewing an old acquaintance. He received me with cold dignity and observed: "You will of course understand that the last thing I want is vulgar puffery."

And it was as a reporter that I was once the guest of Keble College, Oxford.

And then the stage has its opportunities of a similar kind. Once on a time I was strolling in "Pastorals," that kind of theatrical entertainment which is given in the open air—unless it comes on to rain, and then the company and some of the audience adjourn to the town hall or the village schoolroom, where two geraniums in pots and one aspidistra in the same, artistically arranged on the platform, represent, with a technique that is quite Chinese, "these woods" of the Forest of Arden, declared in the text to be more free from peril than the envious court. Well, in the course of one of these old pastoral tours, my management, Messrs. Garnet Holme and Harcourt Williams, had secured a "cert." That is, we were to give our show at a fixed fee from a gentleman who was entertaining all friends round Stow-on-the-Wold at a garden party. The gentleman lived in a noble fifteenth-century house in that noble old village. He was waiting for us at his arched doorway; waiting eagerly. Not exactly out of the spirit of antique hospitality: but, to warn the players to go up by the back stairs. As we went up he called another and a still more stringent warning after us: we were by no means to use any of the hot water from his bath-room tap. I am sorry to say that Henry Herbert—now a "star" in America, I believe—at once had a hot bath, not because he wanted such a thing, but because his was a spirit that revolted against all the forms and circumstances of oppression. Hungry and thirsty we came to that house after a long railway journey, hungry and thirsty we left it in the evening, though the tea spoons were clinking in the saucers, though the ice chimed musically in the big jugs of claret cup, though there must have been an abundance of broken victuals; bread and butter and cake, which would be thrown away or given to the pigs. I believe the gentleman was a retired potter of the Five Towns.

Then there was another occasion, like but yet unlike to the Adventure of Stow-on-the-Wold. Again, we were a company of Pastoral Players, again the management had got a "cert." But this time our host was the late Duke of Norfolk, not a retired potter. Well, need I say more? the Duke treated us poor vagabonds as if we had all been dukes and duchesses, with the kindest hospitality and the most genial friendliness.

So much in explanation of the gift of vision which is vouchsafed to the poor and humble; and now for that particular application of the doctrine which serves as comment to The Secret Glory. Those who have read that tale are aware that it shows a certain lack of enthusiasm for the ethos of our great public schools. Well, in 1904, my old master, the Admirable Sir Frank Benson, was touring some of the big public schools with a representation that had been at his heart for many years. This was the Aeschylean Trilogy: the Agamemnon, the Libation Bearers and the Furies. The first school to be visited was Harrow. Of course, the whole affair had been arranged with the school authorities; the performance was given in the school Speech Room; and, I suppose, Harrow School was in a sense the host, and we, of the Benson Company, were the school guests.

In the Greek classics we read that guests and strangers are the children of God. But I believe that for many years the study of the classics has declined in our schools. It has been pointed out by many weighty authorities that Homer and Virgil do not lead to eminence in that form of swindling the public which is called "business" and more nobly still "big business." I am willing to suppose that young Harrow as long ago as 1904 had realised this, and was devoting its attention to more up to date studies: the manufacture of stinks and shocks and the careful and daily perusal of the Daily Mail. This curriculum, perhaps, fails to deal with the treatment due to guests, especially to guests of a humble kind. At any rate, the Benson Company was escorted up Harrow High Street—the street that goes up "the Hill" that makes your heart thrill when you think of the day when you came so strange and shy—by gangs of boys who were lavish of such courtesies as are usually bestowed on procurers and prostitutes. Some of the girls of the Company had their

back hair pulled; the manly English schoolboys wanted to find out whether it were real: insults and offensiveness of every sort were rained on all.

At this time, there was a show on the Halls, a sort of Glee Party, called Somebody's Eton Boys. I was telling a friend the story of our reception at Harrow. He spoke of the "Eton Boys," and suggested that we ought to run an opposition show, to be called "Wood's Harrow Boys"—Dr. Wood was then headmaster of Harrow.

"If," he said, meditatively, "if there were any reason to suppose that we could find in the worst slums of London a gang of hooligans offensive enough to be able to play the Boys."

Thus, it will be noted, the poor strollers, by reason of their low estate, were given a vision of the heart of "the Hill" which would never be vouchsafed to the Prince of Wales.

So much for the ethos of the Great Public Schools, as it is dealt with in *The Secret Glory*. Another point in that work relates to the tributes which schoolmasters bestow on one another. I depict them as writing highly offensive folly concerning their colleagues. Not long ago, a few days, in fact, after the publication of *The Secret Glory*, I read a review of Edmond Warre, a life of a late Eton headmaster. Here is the sort of thing that Dr. Warre's colleagues wrote of him.

"I distinctly feared," writes one of them, "Warre's accession. I feared the dominance of athletics, his own autocratic ways, his strict adherence to the routine of what I thought rather a narrow and dry 'scholasticism.' The change came, and never was a more delightful surprise—it was like a fresh wind from the sea blowing into the place."

Another:

"I like to think," said a later colleague and successor, "that Warre regarded the school as a great army on the march, the pace of which must necessarily be kept uniform."

The Lower Master :

Warre's visits to the schoolroom were tremendous, there is no other word for it. The door flew open and in he swept. The boys sprang up with palpitating hearts, and the master looked suddenly bewildered. Yet there was nothing to fear; the awe was that naturally felt in the presence of majesty.

Another one, on his *Boots!*

They were not ungainly nor policemanlike boots, but only the Head could have wielded them—and "wield" is the only verb that fits the case . . . he seemed hardly mortal in his bigness.

Yet another, on his Voice, which Vibrated :

This vibration had an effect on one's spine like that of the fiddles in the overture to Tristan.

So here was a Head—very likely the poor man in real fact was as harmless and as decent a pedagogue as ever took the Sixth in Sophocles—who was like a fresh wind from the sea, who thought that every one of his thousand scholars must learn his lessons at the same rate, just as an army must march at the same pace, who gave the boys a well-known functional disease of the heart by opening a door, bewildered the masters—no great feat, it would seem—wielded boots that none else of men could wield. Bow of Odysseus—was of ordinary height but seemed hardly mortal in his bigness, and had a voice like fiddles!

I gave it up! I tried in *The Secret Glory* to parody the sort of rot that schoolmasters write about each other; but I find that my attempt was useless. These Eton masters on their late Head read like an extravagant parody of my parodies.

What can such fellows as these teach—save cant?

There was once (1830-1840) a Berkshire Tory Squire, an old Winchester boy named Hughes, who wrote a letter of grave rebuke to a son at Rugby. The son, a praepostor, was accused

of having allowed an Italian image-man to be "ragged" by the boys. And the father, who seems to have belonged to that interesting though extinct species called "Christian Gentleman," wrote—I quote from memory—

"Do you not know that it is the special privilege of a gentleman to protect the poor ; and that he who despises the poor despises the ordinance of God in making them so?"

Ah, if old Mr. Hughes—he was the father of the author of Tom Brown's Schooldays—could have seen the Harrovians hounding their guests, the play-actors and play-actresses, through Harrow street!

Hampton

BY SALLY BRUCE KINSOLVING.

I have heard the lofty rhythm of the sea
Swinging her silver tides on moonlit sands,
Or, throbbing with the soul of many lands,
Great orchestras in measured unity ;
But here at last I know that I have found
In swelling surge and rhythmic rise and fall
Of Negro voices in a chorus all
The reach and vast infinitude of sound . . .
The battle moan of tribes with bow and quiver
Above the cadence of a jungle river,
The scourge of lashing waves, like many whips,
Upon the aching shoulders of slave-ships,
The ebb and flow of sorrow and of wrong
Now breaking into freedom's mighty song.

Atlanta

BY FRANCES NEWMAN.

Perhaps the fortunate inhabitants of the most ancient American commonwealth see at least subtle distinctions among themselves, but those persons who must regret their slight knowledge of such high matters may be pardoned for believing that no one of its towns enjoys a heartening sense of superiority to all of its other towns. Those cities which are merely the fine flower of their state are doubtless the happiest cities—Boston, for example, the quintessence of Massachusetts. But Charleston looks down her aquiline nose at most of the state through which the Ashley and the Cooper flow to unite at her feet and form the ocean, and Savannah speaks only, in her own state, to Augusta. Savannah and Charleston bow to each other across the river, but there is a curious difference between them—in Charleston one is either a Pringle or a Middleton or a Blake or a Rutledge or a Pinckney, or at least a Ravenel or a Huger, or one isn't, and there is no more to be said about it than if a Charlestonian Debreth had them all down in black and white; in Savannah, no two families will admit that the other "goes out" and usually they will tell you that the father of the other family wore his first dress suit at a dinner to which the father of the family which is speaking invited him for business reasons. And still, Savannah is getting on for two hundred years—no great matter in the eyes of Cheops of Egypt—or in the eyes of Atlanta, but a great matter in the eyes of Savannah, where, little as any one will believe it, people are said to pride themselves on ancestors who emigrated with the philanthropic Oglethorpe. But Savannah is far from being the only town in Georgia which sniffs at Atlanta—we are too young, too complacent, too prosperous in our upstart fashion, to be any more popular with our fellow Georgians than the United States of America are with those European nations which are rather older than Savannah. Atlanta, so far as one may judge by one night spent in Macon when Josef Hofmann happened to be playing there, one spent in Savannah at the age of eleven, one spent in Athens, where the University of Georgia has its seat, is like the rest of Georgia only

in its constantly excavated red clay foundation. Unless a man chooses a peripatetic profession like the law, he may be christened and buried by the Bishop of Atlanta, knowing no more of Georgia than may be revealed by the impressive and easily distinguished flock of legislators which can be seen about our streets in July and August. Not that there is much basis for the legend which attributes the vitality of Atlanta to constantly arriving immigrants from the frozen north who come down to supply energy to a people exhausted by those actinic rays of the sun which our latitude makes so deleterious to the great race: there was once a certain Mr. H. I. Kimball who built the Kimball House which still grimly survives to shelter political headquarters and there was a certain Governor Rufus Bullock who ran away with a carpet bag and there were some astute business men from New England who conceived the idea of building a railroad through a part of Georgia still so virgin that the railroad is now about to be pulled up by the roots like a pithy radish. Of course, a distressing number of r's roll about the streets in a fashion which no native Georgian could possibly manage, but these ordinarily issue from the throats of southeastern representatives of notable soap-boilers or tire manufacturers or school book publishers—Atlanta's tallish buildings are filled with southeastern representatives and her prosperity is vastly increased by them.

But these valuable officials would never have come among us if the poor foundling of a village, which had no Oglethorpe to father it, no godfather to christen it, had gone through life with a name that would forever have prevented its being mentioned in Bradstreet and Dun, or in the Spur and Town and Country and Town Topics. Though we are not yet so kindly received by Augusta and Savannah as Mrs. Fitz-Adam was by Miss Matty and Miss Pole and Mrs. Forrester and the Hon. Mrs. Jamieson, like that lady, born Hoggins, we have cleverly managed a nominal advance. The small cell which has become Atlanta was called Terminus, without any formal baptism, because it was the terminus of a railroad. It suffered a backset and became Marthasville. But the eponymous Miss Lumpkin, who still survived to grace flag-draped platforms within the memory of the younger

inhabitants, was possessed of a second name—the rather distinguished name which her god-child now bears, though whether it is a feminine noun derived from the more or less adjacent Atlantic Ocean, or whether it is a slightly elided compliment to the fleet-footed heroine of the Calydonian boar hunt, philologists have been at no pains to determine. But it is certainly a good name and its success compares favorably with the success of Mr. Eastman's and Mr. Cheeseborough's cleverly entitled products.

Atlanta, then, is a self-made town: it has only one God-given advantage and that is its peerless climate. Its inhabitants perish neither of heat nor of cold, they never have malaria, they are untroubled by earthquakes, floods and cyclones. Slow moving persons from Montgomery, Alabama, and from Macon, Georgia—who sometimes weary of their annual struggles to move the capital to Macon and move themselves to the capital—are commonly believed to walk faster when they have lived one short week in Atlanta, whose population is vastly increased by rejuvenated Carolinians and Alabamians and by those Tennesseans who came down in 1865 when they were rather indiscriminately hanging men and women there. Even Virginians, and Virginians bearing the most honored names, live cheerfully among a people who are wonderfully little concerned with armorial quarterings: only Charlestonians are forever unassimilable. They have been heard so say that Georgians and *South* Carolinians are as different as Americans and Chinamen; we entirely agree with them, but we also, of course, are of the opinion that the Charlestonians are the Chinamen, what with rice and ancestor worship and a certain charming—well, somnolence is perhaps the most urbane word. Still, parvenus though we are, Atlanta was not built in a day. In the year 1835, the General Assembly of Georgia authorized the building of a railroad from the Tennessee line to “the point most eligible for the running of branch roads thence to Athens, Madison, Milledgeville, Forsyth and Columbus” and we now occupy that strategic point. In the year 1836, the first house was built at the prospective terminus of the prospective railroad. And in the course of twenty-eight years enough houses of one kind and another were built to shelter some twelve thousand people. Judging from the old photographs still routed out on occasions by our

newspapers, the wicked General Sherman was guilty of rather slighter crimes against art than the Venetians who threw shells into the Parthenon or the Turks who used it as a powder magazine: he was probably scarcely even so guilty as the Germans who sent those far-darting shells among the slightly less beautiful mansards of Paris. Nevertheless, the descendants of the expelled twelve thousand persons whose houses were burned in 1864 are not yet convinced that he was more amiable than the forgotten Morosini or the well-remembered Hindenburg, but Mr. Stephen Graham was reckoning without the celebrated human power of recuperation when he apparently expected to find us not only in ashes but in sackcloth and also apparently found the cheerfulness of Peachtree Street quite heartless in a people who suffered such indignities not sixty years ago. Perhaps he might have thought us more sensitive to our past if he had discovered that, with a poetic turn rather creditable in a race sometimes called commercial, we have taken the phoenix rising from the flames as our arms and *Resurgens* as our motto. The six neatly crossed sticks from which the flames arise from which the phoenix arises, however, are nothing at all like the present inconsequent arrangement of our streets. But we like their infinite variety: we are actually vain of the Five Points, culmination of angles by no means equal, which form the centre of our town and the spot where an artesian well once hygienically stood, where republican presidents now address our plebs and are greeted with ill-bred salvos for their immediate and democratic predecessors and somehow manage further to solidify the South. We are also vain of our celebrated Peachtree Street, once the path, according to the most agreeable story, along which lowing herds wandered out to the irresistible waters of the blossom shaded Peachtree Creek. Atlanta has happily no Main Street—she has only this vernal named thoroughfare which becomes, at its southern shopping end, Whitehall Street, and allows any one who is incorrigibly given to such memories an opportunity to be reminded of the Stuarts and Sweet Nell of Old Drury.

The people who walk along this street, and frequently meet violent deaths in crossing it, are not positively savage in their external appearance: that lawless spirit which is journalistically

supposed to fill them does not meet the eye. The men of Atlanta must certainly have their trousers pressed at least twice a week. They all put on straw hats for opera week and if they do not take them off before the fifteenth of September, the callow youths who stand in front of the Peachtree Street Nunnally's will do it for them—that is perhaps the most conspicuous violence a spinster of this parish will see in fifty years, unless it be a night shirt parade of victorious students of the Georgia School of Technology on a football night. Feminine Atlanta has something of Mr. Max Beerbohm's tenderness for cosmetics, and, between nature and art, the callow youths have rather decorative ladies to look at: if they are not so smart as the ladies of Fifth Avenue, they are much prettier, and if they are not so pretty as the ladies of Kentucky, they are much smarter. They are, however, as distressingly given to wearing the same thing at the same time as most other women: last spring, all of them, disregarding race, servitude, and the present or previous condition of their hair and complexions, went into violet tweeds and violet hats; and for quite two winters they have been brave, and hot, in squirrel coats, whether well come by or not. And, of course, they go to other places than Nunnally's. Even in Atlanta we have a sort of social distinctions, though the elements are undoubtedly mixed in them. The Piedmont Driving Club—which proves its antiquity by its name—is our St. Cecilia, our Assembly, but the requirements for membership are different and years of reflection will not quite reveal what they are. Lineage will do something and money—not so fearfully much money—will do more, but even the two together will not do everything. Fame would doubtless do all, but no one who was famous has ever been put up. It may be that one must contribute something—a genius for dancing will do, but take it all in all, a talent for being fashionable in just the right way and for bounding one's horizon on all four sides by the club's flourishing cedars will do most.

The autochthonous, we are told, know very little about Atlanta. We fancied ourselves as hospitable as Arabs, but people say that Atlanta is not very cordial to strangers; they also say that we never listen to what is said to us. All of Georgia says that we boast insufferably about a mysterious something we call the Atlanta spirit, but even those few Atlantians who do not know their

Freud know what complexes cause such remarks. Still, it is occasionally borne in upon us that one may live contentedly in a town where there is not much one may point out with pride to a visiting stranger. There is, to be sure, Stone Mountain, on the face of which Mr. Gutzon Borglum is about to show Lucerne what kind of memorial to the Southern Confederacy he can carve on the largest monolith in the world. But, no matter how much one may prefer the works of man to the works of God, it is perhaps pardonable to feel a trifle nervous for this frieze of Lees and Jacksons and Johnstons which is to make the Parthenon's youths and maidens and gods and goddesses look like a strip of adhesive plaster—Phidias could have done it, Michelangelo could have done it, Rodin, last of the truly apostolic succession, could have done it. Perhaps Mr. Borglum can do it, but the mountain is vastly impressive as it is—aeons of storms have given it the curve and the sweep of another Niagara, and when all the trees are orange and crimson below its stark granite magnificence, Nature might easily stand up and say that man is a pygmy and would do much better to let her handiwork alone. Curious to relate, even when a rare duke happens into Atlanta, he will not leave without examining the Federal Prison of which, in some periodicals, Atlanta is the mere synonym, and its inmates—Mr. Debs calls them inmates—are, in the same periodicals, the only persons who have a reasonable excuse for remaining in so unsettled a community. Mr. Debs' recently published opinion that the food at our prison is nothing to boast of grieves those of us who happened to light upon his verdict: the young reporters who go out to eat Christmas dinner with the gentlemen who, so we innocently thought, had shown their cleverness by breaking their country's laws instead of their state's, always returned with heartening accounts of the number of turkeys and potatoes consumed and sometimes actually with photographs of them. And in the spring, these same young reporters—the very starriest ones—used to go out with the abdicated Miss Farrar and the lamented Caruso and strike pity and terror to the hearts of people brave enough to read the tale of how strong men wept when the lovely Geraldine sang Home, Sweet Home.

That will never happen again. It is whispered, not so very privately, that we have lost Miss Farrar forever. Time was, when our opera was a wonderful, an unbelievable glory, when we had not yet embraced so very many opportunities to listen to *Aida* and *Il Trovatore* and *La Bohème*, and none at all to listen to *Zazà*, that Miss Farrar was heroine, in yellow organdies and prima donna hats, of modish garden parties and of lunches on the terrace of that same Piedmont Driving Club. But Atlanta is a straight-laced town—sometimes—and Miss Farrar's *Carmen* was too much for an audience which had gone to worship her, and which remained to applaud the virtuous and injured Micaela in the substantial person of Madame Alda. Miss Farrar, it was murmured, would never come back to so barbaric a town: but her memories and ours both grew gentler after three or four years and she consented to allow us to look upon her *Zazà*. The audience, or perhaps one should say the spectators, were thrilled, enchanted, ravished—and departed to say that the performance was all of those four adjectives that only Mr. John Sumner may print without being haled into court. It is a pity.

But even without its tenor and its soprano, we still have our week of undeniably metropolitan song, with its seven never quite unrelievedly Verdi and Puccini operas, its two official dinner dances, its four after opera supper dances, its three almost Riviera like teas under the striped umbrellas of the Georgian Terrace, enlivened by Mr. Antonio Scotti, who stands by the balustrade in Riviera garb and is almost host of the afternoons, its barbecue at the Druid Hills Club, its memorable visits to stellar dressing rooms under the amiable protection of Mr. William J. Guard. Once upon a time Mr. Otto Kahn honored us with a personal appearance and the Metropolitan Orchestra played for the dance that he gave—but Toscanini did not conduct. Then it is that every one who must have a visitor has the visitor and official festivities, whereat poor Caruso used to languish beside a lady of whom all Atlanta walks in terror, are depleted for dinings where wining is even less veiled.

For we are by no means so destitute of the materials for inebriation as some people may think: just lately, we have been almost washed away on a sea of Bacardi Rum, an almost posi-

tive proof that our bootleggers are sufficiently cultivated to read Mr. Hergesheimer. We also occasionally see a cocktail made from really Gordon gin—the labels are certainly a little loose, sometimes—though there are penurious people who take advantage of the fact that gin and our native corn whiskey look perilously alike. But we have other more commendable interests. We are a large horse and mule market, we manufacture the celebrated beverage called Coca-Cola, and we consider that outside Atlanta no one knows how to mix it properly with lime, with lemon, with ammonia, with dozens of sharpening beverages that only our knowing palates demand—we like it so very much that we drink what are familiarly called double-header dopes, and any one who goes early to the dentist will descend in an elevator filled with little typists coming down to brace themselves up. We manufacture horse-collars, paper bags and paper boxes, rather inelegant cottons that know not Jacquard, we plane lumber and produce a frightful amount of fertilizer. We have a Methodist University, which looks as if it were built of soap, but which is actually built of Georgia marble of many colors, a Presbyterian University and an equally Presbyterian college for women. We educate doctors and dentists and lawyers. We are the seat of half a dozen colleges for the higher education of the colored race, and the eminent Dr. DuBois was once Professor of History in the chief of them, Atlanta University. Very shortly we shall be the seat of the Ku Klux Klan's University. We have the first and incomparably the best public library in the South. Its engaged columns may prejudice the aesthetic against it, but once inside even Mr. Hugh Walpole was so astounded by its erudition—concerning English fiction—that he went so far as to write about it in *Vanity Fair*. He was, however, rather disturbed because a person like Ronald Firbank, who, so he said, wears a velvet jacket and a tip-tilted hat “had a public here”; when Mr. Walpole returned he was doubtless more disturbed to find that Mr. Firbank now has a public in New York.

We have the largest and most magnificent theatre for the exhibition of cinematographic plays south of somewhere; and, indeed it is a bit distressing to survey even Mr. Charles Chaplin in such luxury and then to sit in a barn and keep ourselves warm—

our opera verges into May—when we listen to *L'Amore dei Tre Re*, even though the barn, as Segurolo was wont to say, is so acoustic. It is much worse to sit there and hear Miss Ethel Leginska or Leo Ornstein or Kreisler or Heifetz when we have one of those recitals which our semi-equinoctial over-indulgence in operas makes unhappily infrequent. But we would be as delighted to sit there and listen to an orchestra of our own as we would be to look at even a pink-nosed Guido Reni in a museum of our own—desiderata that, despite the efforts of devoted females who have never suspected that they are emasculating civilization in the United States, will probably be denied us until the pious are no longer the only ones among us who flourish sufficiently to endow universities which shall stand with Disraeli on the side of the angels—and on the extreme right. A play on top of the stage is not quite such a mystery to us as a painting, but when one is vouchsafed us, it will, unless we are very home-keeping, be something we saw in New York not enough years before for us to be amused by seeing it again, with a star who is not quite a Barrymore and a production which is not quite a Robert Edmond Jones. But we have an equally eminent Bobby Jones of our own, the well-known Mr. R. H. Jones, Jr., who always nearly wins a national championship; and we have Miss Alexa Stirling, obviously a member of the Nordic race, and as good evidence as Mr. Jones and the Georgia Tech football team that Mr. Madison Grant has somewhat over-estimated the deleterious effects of actinic rays. And we have a Writers' Club, though our only downright professional author is a certain Mr. Eric Levison, who writes detective stories and who, it is feared, looks forward to becoming as great a writer as Mr. Octavus Roy Cohen, citizen of our deadly rival, Birmingham, Alabama. We have some youths, just coming on, who do not look forward to surpassing Mr. Cohen, but the moment, fatally, that our youths and maidens suspect themselves of being promising, they offer themselves up in the Labyrinth of New York and become more or less respectable journalists instead of profiting by the example of those eminent novelists who have remained where they had roots, instead of going away to become intellectual air plants.

Contentment with so Carthaginian a city may be considered

to show the terrible results of such birth and such residence, but none the less, we are much more than content with our lot. No one, surely who has had the advantage of being born in the South would willingly become a mere Yankee, obliged constantly to explain, with three r's in the adjective and only one very short o in the noun, that he also had Southern blood, and to converse with young ladies who feel no responsibility for keeping some sort of talk going. And if the most profound interest in THE REVIEWER's prosperity did not forbid, it would be no trouble at all to prove to every one except the inhabitants of the other Southern towns just why Atlanta is the most desirable Southern town to be born in, whether or not one may be justified in dying here. Of course, if one could be born again into any country, station and gender, it would be necessary reluctantly to abandon America—though under the circumstances the abandonment could scarcely become so complete a literary stock in trade as it has for Mr. Harold Stearns—and become a Roman prince—an Aldobrandini, perhaps, and an Aldobrandini of fortune so princely that the deliciously rococo cascade could flow night and day. But if so splendid a fate be beyond one's deserts, and if one's ancestors must have been of a condition which made emigration desirable, it's just as well to be new and spruce as not old and a bit out of repair.

The Literary Year In Paris

*The Main Currents of French Literature during 1922, as
exemplified in a few typical works*

BY ERNEST BOYD.

Unlike New York, Paris is a city of culture, to which the more ardent souls among the younger American literati can repair for the spiritual sustenance they seek in vain in their own country. Moreover, Paris is the artistic barometer of Europe, registering with the accurate delicacy of a seismograph the cultural pressure, the tremors of intellectual travail, all over the European continent. In order to appreciate the mighty triumphs of an older civilisation in the art of letters it is sufficient to consult the records of the year's output, as measured by the successful works of the most esteemed French authors. Only too frequently we who are on this—shall I say the wrong?—side of the Atlantic get our impressions of what France is reading from the pages of our eclectic magazines, where a book of verse has merely to be entitled "B. %. F. à Z-606" to move our indigenous Imagists to ecstasy. Fortunately, I can reassure my readers on this score. In these notes they will not find any reference to such eccentricities. The works which I have noted in this diary month by month are all representative volumes, written by members of the French Academy, or the Chamber of Deputies, by substantial figures in the literary world of Paris. They have all been sanctified by the applause of the great majority of the educated reading public in France. Everybody has heard how much finer than the American the educated European is, how much more sensitive to Beauty. I need not therefore, labor the significance of these successes.

JANUARY. The year opened with *Amour Incestueux*, by Bobby and Suzette Bobby, whose delightful stories of French school-girl life are known wherever the French language is spoken, or can be guessed at. Before the first shipments could be made to America the book was in its 150th thousand. The authors have

added one more chapter to the adventures of the charming Pauline, the typical *jeune fille*, whose early life in her country home, at college and in the social whirl of Paris has been related in the famous Pauline series. The story opens with a description of the promenoir of the Folies-Bergères, where Pauline is a familiar figure, and from thence the reader is conducted on a veritable tour of inspection through those resorts and restaurants which have a hallowed place in the memory of every American visitor to the City of Light. This is the world, or rather the underworld, in which the radiant and gracious figure of Pauline moves, through scenes which only the subtle art of Bobby and Suzette Bobby can render. When love finally comes to Pauline, not the passing whims of an amorous and wilful girl, but the grand passion of which perhaps only the Latin soul is capable, then all the resources of the French language are required to describe the real identity of the young man for whom her blood is fired one riotous night in the *Lapin Agile*. I understand a limited edition for subscribers only will be issued for American readers, under the happy title, *The Heart of a Virgin*.

FEBRUARY. *Le Mariage d'une divorcée*. Par Paul Gourget, de l'Académie Française. In his new novel the eminent Academician, to quote the words of one of his distinguished colleagues in *Le Figaro*, "brings all the exquisite skill of a master psychologist to the handling of a theme whose novelty and daring would have deterred a lesser genius. With his profound intuition M. Gourget has discovered the great problem which victorious France must solve, now that the Boches have been crushed and the world is waiting for the message of the French soul. He has dared to ask if it is right for a divorced woman to marry again." The central figure in this absorbing study of aristocratic France is the Comtesse Liane de Polignac de Saussure, whose husband is a Levantine adventurer named Papadiamantopoulos, who made an immense fortune during the war, with which he acquired his wife and the title and the estates of her impoverished but noble family. While her husband was profiteering, Liane was working with the Red Cross, from which she had to retire at the end of two years because she was suffering from shell shock received during the bombardment of the hospital in which she was stationed.

It was during her convalescence at Cannes that she met the man with whom she was married by her parents, whose sole concern was to save the estates and perpetuate the name of the ancient house. The union was short-lived, for one of the strange consequences of the Comtesse's shell shock was that she became liable to fits of aberration, during which she would wander off in search of love adventures. Something in the subconscious was released and her temperament could satisfy the deep craving for romance which was usually concealed beneath a cold aristocratic exterior.

Unfortunately the common mind of the *çi-devant* Papadimantopoulos can neither rise to her level nor appreciate with the magnanimity of the truly noble these adventures. He is carrying on an intrigue with a Russian dancer, whom he has installed in a chic apartment overlooking the Parc Monceau. One day he causes Liane to be discovered in flagrante delicto by detectives, and at once institutes proceedings for divorce, regardless of the spiritual anguish, added to his wife's mental misery, which the mere idea of divorce produced in the mind of a true and devoted Catholic. However, the marriage settlement has secured a substantial sum for the Polignac de Saussures, so they submit, the more so as Liane had been delivered of a son, who will carry on the traditions and the name. Liane, after a pilgrimage to Lourdes, is cured of her strange malady, and in the train on the way back to Paris she meets a young aviator, Lieutenant Pierre de Braye, in whom she discovers the playmate of her happy childhood on their adjoining estates in Touraine. Pierre is an atheist, and in a succession of wonderful chapters the author shows us the struggle of this beautiful woman to bring back the man she now loves to the faith of Old France. With the assistance of the Abbé Trévan she accomplishes this, but only to be faced by the passionate pleading of the young man, who now thinks that the last obstacle to their marriage has been removed. Paul Gourget knows how to stir the reader's feelings as he evokes the picture of this conflict of body and soul, for the Abbé, now that he is assured of Pierre's conversion, no longer encourages the meetings at which he had formerly connived. The hand of fate intervenes. The aviator is seriously injured in a flying accident and Liane hastens to his bedside to nurse him.

There is a scene of marvellous pathos when she hears that there is no hope of saving the life of her lover and she comes into the room prepared to make his last hours happy with the supreme felicity. But under the stress of emotion Pierre develops a sudden hemorrhage and dies in the arms of the woman who had decided to become his mistress for the brief span of life left to him. An epilogue tells of the renunciation of her fortune by the Comtesse Liane de Polignac de Saussure, who abandons the world in which she was so unhappy to end her days as Soeur Marie-des-Anges.

MARCH. Quite a crop of important books this month to set the translators busy, and to make the American publishers' teeth water. Henri Papsse publishes another of his superb studies of the proletarian revolt, under the title of *Le Fou*, which appears almost simultaneously in English as *Man*. On the jacket are words of praise by George Brandes, Romain Rolland, Stefan Zweig, 'Gene Debs and Floyd Dell. Bertrand Russell writes: "Your book reached me as I was preparing a monograph on Einstein. That day I read no more on relativity. Now it has all been told. You have told the truth for the first time. *Man* is expressed in this virginal work. He is *Le Fou*." An invaluable tome on the Peace Treaty by Gabriel Mondieu, "*La Vraie Paix*," in which J. M. Keynes is once more triumphantly refuted by an obviously impartial critic. Gyp's three hundredth novel appears, *Lolotte s'en f—l*, showing the same mastery of the same subject as *Cricri s'embête*,—see review by Anatole France in *Le Temps* of January 3, 1879. *Dramatis personae*: He and She and little Bob. Later: the Other Man and the Other Woman. Chorus: Hebrew visitors. First edition of 50,000 copies exhausted a month after publication.

APRIL-MAY. For two months now there has been only one subject of literary discussion in France. Je sais tout, by the distinguished statesman and ex-Senator, Comte Adrien-Albert-Marie de la Grave. This is one of those illuminating political autobiographies which only the clarity and logic of the French mind render possible. Each year sees the publication of one of these invaluable volumes throwing an interesting light upon social life and politics in the Third Republic, and beside which the

indiscretion of less candid nations read like the innocent prattle of a young girl. Comte de la Grave looks back over a long career of disinterested service on behalf of France, whether Imperial or Republican, for the author of these memoirs shows a truly admirable power of adapting himself to the changes of régime that have marked the history of his country during the last fifty years. His boyhood and youth were spent in travel and on the family estate in Burgundy, of which he evokes a charming picture in the opening chapters of his reminiscences. Even at the early age of fifteen he had already developed to a remarkable degree some of the qualities which were to prove of the utmost value to him in public life. There is a true flavor of the Eighteenth Century in the almost Rabelaisian candor of his first adventures in the art of love, his initiation by a buxom maid of his mother's, whom he surprised under circumstances which can only be related in his own words, and finally, after several experiences of that kind, his first grand passion for a mature siren, the wife of his father's best friend.

Needless to say, it is not such, after all rather commonplace, incidents in the life of a young Frenchman of good family which have made *Je sais tout* the important book of the year. When Comte de la Grave recalls his political experiences, it is then that his book becomes an historical document of the highest order. Entering the public service during the last years of the Second Empire, he is able to give a fascinating glimpse of the follies and splendours of the Empress Eugénie's court, where as a handsome youth of twenty-six he had many opportunities for the exercise of his peculiar talents. His book will be a mine for future historians, while the reader who can enjoy a human story a thousand times more stimulating than any work of fiction will like these tales of love and war and politics.

SEPTEMBER. The first of the autumn novels is *Mimosa San*, by Paul Rôti, de l'Académie Française. It is a work of infinite grace and tender beauty, from the hand of a master, and filled with the perfume of the Orient. It seems as if the petals of the lotus flowers had unfolded to pour all their sweetness into this passionate romance. The theme is original and shows that M. Rôti can still weave with undiminished vigor the enchantments

which captured Paris in 1865. Mimosa San is the pretty little geisha girl adored by the young Breton naval officer César-Yann-Yves de Kérodrescq, whose vessel is stationed in Chinese waters. Their love has lasted but a year and a day, and Mimosa is sad as she sits on a tabouret in their deserted home, while the temple bells send forth their melancholy call to prayer from the neighbouring minarets, for Yves is away in To-Pang at a cabaret. He has forgotten his Orange Blossom, and remains in the big town, drinking highballs with the American cabaret dancer, Myrtle Strong, known in the movie world as Demetria Lydiowskaia. The contrast between Oriental and Western civilisation is subtly personified by these two women who struggle characteristically for the heart of a man. With wonderful pathos M. Rôti describes the inevitable renunciation of Mimosa San, who sends their little child out to play while she spreads her couch with Taliput leaves and lies down to die, after opening a vein in her arm. The book is a superb indictment of the brutal irruption of Western civilisation into the eternal East.

OCTOBER. The crop of masterpieces is now so plentiful that only the briefest indications are possible. *La Première Nuit*, by Marcel Prévost, a delicious novel, in the author's favorite letter form, being the correspondence of two young brides after their wedding night to a mutual bachelor friend. *Le Jupon de Flanelle*, by Henry Bordeaux, de l'Académie Française, a sequel to the eminent Academician's *Robe de Laine*, in which the problem of the sanctity of French home life is studied with the Anglo-American invasion as a background. The acceptance by Edmée Dubedant of a set of Kayser silk dessous from an American officer in Bordeaux furnishes the author with a clue to the undermining of the French foyer and the corruption of the jeune fille française by foreign customs. A new volume of plays by Georges Courteline, of which the title piece is *Baisse ta Jupe, Adèle!*—Also the twenty-first instalment of Gabriel Joust's novel in thirty volumes, *Nineveh et Babylon*, in which the author continues his sympathetic narrative of homosexuality, but as nobody has ever read more than the first part, this interesting fact continues to remain undisclosed, and his work is warmly recommended by the ladies who give advice to the women's clubs in America.

NOVEMBER. Everything this month seems to be translated from American, and editorials in the literary supplements rejoice at the signs of an increasing interest in American culture. Jack London's *Burning Daylight* is classed with Homer by the *Journal des Débats*, *Cheerfulness* as a Life Force calls forth an article in *Les Annales de la Philosophie Contemporaine* on Orison Swett Marden, who is described as a great American philosopher. An edition de luxe of Gene Stratton Porter is announced as entirely subscribed for in advance, and the *Mercure de France* greets a translation of Robert W. Chambers in a thirty page essay on American Masters of Modern Fiction: Upton Sinclair and Robert W. *Chalmers*. The misprint, which occurs throughout, is corrected in a footnote six weeks later.

DECEMBER. The year closes with the prize novels. The Goncourt Academy, ignoring all the works submitted by prominent young writers of merit, crowns a realistic study of whaling life, written by a fisherman in St. Pierre and first published as a serial in a provincial Canadian French newspaper. Great interest in the prize novel of Pierre Benêt, a wonderful adventure story called *Elle*, which cannot, however, be translated as *She*, a fact which the author somehow forgot when reading Rider Haggard. However, but for the adapted title, which reads in English, *The Girl from Atlantis*, the substance of this epoch-making novel, of which over two million copies have been sold, will be found in the early works of the English writer. Finally, the inevitable novel which *nearly* got a prize. This time it is called *La Malcomprise*, and it tells once more about the woman who is misunderstood, who lives her own life, who is in favor of lifting the Russian blockade, and who, after being the mistress of an editor, a deputy, an actor, a movie star, a manicurist (for women) and an American wholesaler, returns to her husband and helps him to edit a newspaper devoted to Marxian socialism.

In short, a crowded year of glorious life and letters, from which the advantages of European culture are apparent.

Revelation

BY ALEXANDER WEDDELL.

From cloudy headland fades the sun's last ray ;
Day's eyes a moment lift ere their soft light
Is hid in cooling shadows of the night,
Hidden since dawn down the dim forest way ;
Enmeshed within the thicket, 'neath a spray
Of vibrant green, fit bower for sylvan sprite,
There sings a bird, down-dropping in his flight
Through beechen glooms, to thrill a roundelay :

Ah, Voice from out the silences are you,
Who hails the Dark's approach with careless mirth,
Heaven-sent to open blinded eyes, to show,
Through mysteries of light and shade and dew,
That hid in shadows is the new day's birth,
That out of midnights splendid morrows flow ?

Tryst

BY MARY DALLAS STREET.

The road stretched before him striped with sun and shadow, and the trees bordering it sang in their color. It was a day she would love. Most of the fields were brown, but one lifted a curved green crest against the autumn sky, and on its edge, high and clear, a bare aspen drew a fine polished tracery of gold. A team of horses passed along the road, a black and a gray, each color stronger for the other till black and gray shone and their shadows lay sharp on the white road beneath. The moving team, with its moving shadow, the trees that rustled dryly in the wind, the light that came so strongly from the sun, the earthy fields golden in its strength, touched the man to a kind of ecstasy. If he could only tell her his gladness—she who had had such joy and graciousness in life.

He was a lover of Keats, but this, this was no season of mist and mellow fruitfulness, here was no autumn drowsed with poppy fumes, here were the fields Diana knew, here one might catch, deep in the night, the bay of her swift hounds! A lean coon-dog passed him and he smiled. "Have you ever followed that hunt, old man," he said, "has that Goddess, O excellently bright, ever turned and sent you home?"

The wind blew across the road, cool and sweet of old leaves. The dog lifted his head and sniffed. Round a bend came a gray cart drawn by a thick-coated brown mule. An old colored woman and a little, very black colored boy on the one seat. The old woman drew a faded many colored quilt across their knees. The leaves by the roadside in their soft wind-blown lines were not unlike it in color. As the wagon passed a giant sycamore let down a shower of leaves. "She would have liked that," thought the man, "youth and age in their strange fellowship of weakness, the wagon, the brown mule, caught in the circling golden leaves." There was so much she would like, and he had so much to tell her! If he could only tell her *once*! Two years of death, two autumns that she did not know, couldn't one speak over such a little time?

In the next field a man was burning brush. The smoke rose like a veil, torn at the bottom by sharp points of flame. If the smoke thickened, would there be no land beyond it? If man had not been given any sense but sight, would he not deny the four others? Might not memory do more than lead one to the door of death? Might not memory go through? If not, if not, with what songs had Orpheus brought back Eurydice?

The road forked before him, and far down he saw the river coiled and gleaming, flowing from the west, and his mind followed it, back to the Blue Ridge and the Alleghanies, back to the mountains with their serried trees, with the sun setting beyond them, and their valleys all aflame. She had known the river with him. She had seen those valleys. He was not near them now, but yet he saw their winding roads, their little fenced-in houses sheltered from the wind, saw them and knew them. Ah, with what songs but these did Orpheus bring back Eurydice? To lose her, yes, but what need had he to look? To look was like saying to this day of beauty, you are a numbered thing upon a calendar, when what he saw was Autumn as it had been for eternal years. Odysseus had known it on a wine dark sea, with this gold had dropped the trees of Eden.

The sunlight slanted across the road, the shadows and the drifting leaves were never still. In a field close by the shocks of corn seemed to draw all the color of the earth into their bronze stalks. Even so his memories were harvested, holding the past and the future, the color of the world. The wind blew sweet of earth.

"Beloved," he said, "beloved, with these songs—"

That still, despite the distance and the dark,
What was, again may be; some interchange
Of grace, some splendor once thy very thought,
Some benediction anciently thy smile.

Our Ladies of Discontent

BY STANLEY T. WILLIAMS.

The heroines of fiction have more élan than its heroes. The chief business of a hero, after all, is to idealize a heroine. The reader is inclined to tolerate certain roughnesses in his hero, but his heroine, even in a modern novel, must stand for some kind of perfection. Among the Victorians the perfection was likely to be that of a Laura or a Little Nell. Among the moderns it may be that of a blasphemous semi-intellectual, like Monica Whern in *Privilege*. The heroine is apt to set the pace of a novel, as far as ideals are concerned. For the novel is a reflection of life, and who, pray, set the fashions of ideals in life? Certainly not its heroes. A Thackeray might dare to announce a novel "without a hero," but few writers have composed novels without heroines. On the shelves of our libraries we encounter no anthologies of famous heroes in fiction, but, from Shakespeare down, there are galleries of distinguished heroines.

An anthology, then, of contemporary heroines, or merely a list, might tell us something about our own generation. Such a list might prove nothing to our self-critical age, but it might suggest more vividly certain truths about these ladies. It would at least create an interesting, if fictitious, society. For, it is amusing to think of these women not in their own little volumes, but outside them, together, as a group, as human beings. I should like, for example, for some careless hostess to give a tea on Sunday afternoon for us to meet, say Carol Kennicott of *Main Street*, Marjorie Jones of *Brass*, and Mrs. Lee Randon of *Cytherea*. Would you go? Why not a luncheon with adjacent covers for Sally Minto of *Coquette* and Mabel Sabre of *If Winter Comes*? You might exclaim at this, like a famous Victorian, "Dear me!" I can imagine tête-a-têtes between—but you can fancy horrors of your own. Major Pendennis liked to stay last at a party to comment furtively on the guests who had departed early. I should like to do this at the close of a supper-party given by Amelia of *Vanity Fair* to contemporary heroines: talk them over with Amelia, and, later, talk Amelia over with *them*.

One has to admit that socially these modern ladies are superior to their Victorian predecessors. On the whole, isn't Amelia a bore? And personally I should shrink from dining alone with Dorothea Brooke of Middlemarch. If she had to be present, I should much prefer her in the role of waitress. No, even as a waitress, I fear she would be oppressive. As for a boating party with Maggie Tulliver of *The Mill on the Floss*, albeit with its historic climax,—well, I should not care for that either. All these ladies of the Era of the Tame Ox, when placed in a flirtatious setting, become heavy. For the casual encounter or rendezvous most of us—here is the influence of the younger generation—would turn with some relief to Monica Whern. I fancy it would be merrier to meet Carol Kennicott than Dinah Morris of Adam Bede, even at a Gopher Prairie picnic. Our modern heroines do not sit on stiff chairs as upright as themselves; they do not weep; they blush with difficulty; and, bless them, they do not faint. In their society we escape from that faint suggestion of lavender, family pews, croquet, and daguerreotypes which envelope the Victorian heroine. They can dress, drink, and drive a motor. Damme, they are smart!

And for these very reasons I dislike them heartily. Or, rather I dislike them for what these effervescences symbolize. Beneath this froth these ladies are engaged in the serious business of living. They are full of persiflage, but at bottom they are struggling with the problem of all of us, the problem of *how to live*. They face the same difficulties; they meet the same tests of character; they are tossed about in the same topsy-turvy world. In a word their creators offer them to us not at all as gossamer, not as Queen Mabs to spin dreams for us, but as human beings in the thick of life. They speak wittily, but the novelists wish us to think that they act wisely. Their reactions to life, and their conceptions of conduct must be in large measure the writers'. Their behaviour in the struggle of life is the best that they can offer. We are expected to take them seriously. In the eyes of a Sadleir Monica Whern's philosophy of life is as significant as that, in the judgment of Thackeray, of Laura in *Pendennis*. We are invited to consider approvingly what these heroines do in the teeth of life; how they act beneath the bludgeonings of chance.

Now it is interesting to notice how similar are all ordeals to which a novelist may subject his heroine. To get a really new test of character is practically impossible. For although life varies its emergencies by the ironies and eccentricities of which Thomas Hardy is so fond, in essence the tests are identical. There is a condition of life: poverty, wealth, marriage; and there are the passions: grief, hatred, love, and joy. Anyone who is not an anchorite, who is playing the game, encounters these. He is bound to encounter these, and not many others. Life is a card-dealer, and there is only one pack.

So that it becomes comparatively easy to compare the conduct of our modern heroines under the stress of life with that of the great heroines of the past. The tests are the same. The costuming is different; the lights are more glaring; the actors are more finished,—but the drama is the same. I cannot see that the marriage of Carol Kennicott in *Main Street* and that of Dorothea Brooke in *Middlemarch* are different in the basic test to which they enforce each heroine. No one will deny the dissimilarity of detail. The resemblance consists in the fact that for each heroine life has created an intolerable situation demanding escape. And for each, life has proffered a way of escape, if one is willing to pay the price,—namely the sacrifice of honour. The tremendous struggle of Jane Eyre between her passion for Rochester and rectitude is echoed feebly in a thousand modern novels, even if the heroes have not, like Rochester, the annoying circumstances of an insane, apparently immortal wife, confined in another part of the house. The fancies of Marise and Eugenia in *The Brimming Cup* are neither more nor less torturing than those of Maggie Tulliver, although the latter does not have Freud for her guide. Life exacts no more than a hundred years ago, and Victorian heroines, however hoop-skirted, confronted the same baffling, sneering situations, which we all know do occur in fiction, and in life itself.

What, then, is the difference in behaviour? Of course you will say that in the earlier novels there are more reforms, more pious moralizings, more passive acceptances. True. There is some frightful priggishness in Victorian novels. And, you will add, there is not enough plain-speaking. Thackeray is afraid,

and hedges when he describes a Becky Sharpe. Jane Eyre is too stiff-necked. But the essential difference lies in this: the earlier heroines admit, whatever they do, the compelling sway of character. They sin, but they cannot escape its ideals, its influence, and its searing punishments. Margaret in *The Cloister and the Hearth* is as sensitive, as loving of life as any modern heroine, but she feels far more deeply the exactions of conscience. She is capable of severe idealism; of suffering in silence. But the modern heroine must have, first of all, self-expression. Victorian heroines are more inclined to accept what life gives them, provided that they achieve character.

In fact all modern heroines have a quarrel with life. This is the point of the whole matter. Unrest, quite other than divine, consumes them. Something is wrong, not with them, but with life. Life has baffled them; or it has cheated them; or it has repressed them. They will have their revenge. Life is culpable. It fails to amuse them, and they will punish it for its boredom. All modern heroines say a good deal about this sort of thing. they are wont to speak of life as "cruel," "monotonous." They like to talk of how "life gets you." Monica Whern is defiant; Gloria Gilbert is angry. And all for no definite cause. There has been no overwhelming disillusionment, as in Becky Sharpe's story. Embitterment is complete from the outset, apparently from the cradle. Life merely confirms what the modern heroine seems to feel instinctively, that life is a mean business, and must be met with meanness.

Meanness and selfishness. These are the two characteristics of the ladies of our "new fiction," our ladies of discontent. They suffer from inflamed egos; they are neurotic; they are tormented by sex (Whereas in the old novel marriage was a light to illumine character, it is now a pathological problem.) But, above all, the trouble with these ladies is "I",—das grosse Ich. They are paranoiac; restraint is banished. Ruskin felt the trend of things long ago: "It is quite curious," he says in *Fiction Fair and Foul*, "how often the catastrophe or the leading interest of a modern novel, turns upon the want, both in maid and bachelor, of the common self-command which was taught to their grandmothers and grandfathers as the first element of ordinarily decent behaviour."

The concern of our ladies of discontent is not upon the great problem, the conduct of life, "what shall I *do*," but always and eternally upon "how I *feel*." And the importance of these feelings swells into a growth, a disease of the soul, a cancer that crushes and poisons. Those who suffer from it forget the long-tested ideal of duty. Of course. What is more at variance with common sense, they forget the rights of other individuals.

Possibly the root of all this is our lack of religion. We are told so daily. If so, it is religion in the least orthodox sense. Many and greater novelists than these have thrown religion overboard. But never, as in the "new fiction," have they so abolished character, moral law, and belief in the unseen world. George Eliot found life "a bad business," but her pessimism only made her feel more deeply the power of character. Her heroines feel, every one, that the demands of this force are as inexorable as those of the known sciences. But the only force which our ladies of discontent acknowledge is that of their own romantic and rather soiled souls. Are these to become the type heroines of American fiction?

Release

BY FRANCES DICKENSON PINDER.

I knew that you were going—long before
That brittle moment at the end, farewell . . .
And in my heart had garnered words to tell
You all that words may say or hold in store
For one who listens at Love's closing door ;
Such words as guard a woman's secret well,
And yet, for all pride's caution, as the shell
That whispers on of tides that are no more.

For as you came, Beloved, may you go—
At April's hilltop call, a gypsy still . . .
And if at dusk a hollow wind blow chill
Across your dying fire, then may you know
As now, a love too pitiful of woe
To hold a gypsy heart against its will.

Standards of Perception

BY GORDON KING.

Among the writers of serious works on literary subjects there are in America at least two authors devoted to the classical school of criticism, Mr. Irving Babbitt, perhaps the most celebrated living authority on Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Mr. Paul Elmer More, the author of the sombre Shelburne Essays, volumes written chiefly, it would seem, in dejection. With the exception of these two scholars, contemporary American criticism as it appears in the newspapers and magazines offers no significant or adequate expression of the classical mind.

Not only does the absence of this kind of criticism fail to arouse protest, it fails even to achieve recognition. Nobody misses it. We continue as though no such criticism existed and as though we had no need to hear from them. The victory for the modern movement is assumed to be complete, and the classics are cast aside for good and all. But in fact it is the completeness of the victory that indicates the instability of the modern school. If what is true in politics may have some slight analogy in literary history, it is unpleasant to remember that it was only after the Roman Empire had absorbed the whole of the civilized world that it fell in decay. A party in power usually fears most for its safety when it finds itself without a healthy opposition; the ministry divides against itself. Apparently we cannot put forth our best effort unless we are strengthened by the exercise of overcoming obstacles.

But before attempting even the most cursory analysis of the situation thus stated abstractly, it would first be advisable to arrive at some convenient definitions of classical and romantic. The meanings of such words rarely free themselves from controversy and to define them precisely would surely exceed the limits of the present circumstances. Without pretending to completeness or finality, however, it may be possible to assign to them meanings that answer satisfactorily the problem before us.

Let us assume for the moment that the modern movement began with Jean Jacques Rousseau and that the classical domination of literature ended approximately with Voltaire. An eccentric librarian might very possibly arrange his books so that they would converge in and proceed from these contemporaneous authors, using them as points of orientation. Limiting our observation to characteristics generally and indisputably relevant to the issue of criticism, it will be seen that the type of thought that developed in the XIXth and XXth Centuries differs widely both in theory and practice from that of the modern classical era, of classic antiquity, and even of the intervening centuries.

First of all classical criticism is fairly objective. It assumes that the basis of knowledge is comparison. Whatever the feelings of the critic may be, he tries to keep them out of court while he examines the work of art to judge it. A quotation from the late Barrett Wendell, a passage from which the title of this paper is taken, expresses accurately the relation of such a critic to the classics taken as a body of surviving literature.

A pleasantly reassuring fact in the history of human expression is that the names and the works which have survived have done so largely because, though each originally came to light in historical conditions as distinct as those which surround us now, each has proved, when its original surroundings faded, to appeal for one reason or another to generations widely different from that which it chanced to address in the flesh. It has thereby proved itself more enduring than any contemporary could confidently have asserted it; something in its substance, or in its form, or oftener in both, has such general human interest as to be independent of momentary limitation. Thus the classics, ancient and modern, have slowly revealed themselves as standards of perception; whoever comes to know them has a measure by which he can test or correct his impulsive judgment concerning new works of literature, or works presented to him for the first time.*

Plausible as it might be to go no further in search of a practical definition of the classical attitude of mind in criticism, there are at least two dangers in saying merely that the classical

* Barrett Wendell: *The Traditions of European Literature*, Scribner's 1920.

critic is one who judges literature on an objective and comparative basis, and who, being thoroughly grounded in the classics, uses them as standards of perception to check up upon his personal margin or error.

First there is the practical objection that there is not the slightest possibility that any existing press would accept such criticism if it were available, and furthermore that it never was available, nor is likely ever to be. Even where the classics are being studied today, they are being studied as languages, not as literature. The second and theoretical objection to the definition is more serious. Perhaps a few isolated critics might be found to justify the definition, such as the late Mr. Wendell, but is it not possible to have a classically-minded critic totally ignorant of the classics? Why be more classical than the Greeks, who had, presumably, no great body of previous literature whereby to fix their standards of judgment?

It is perhaps possible to extend the definition to meet such an objection. If the Greeks did not look to the art of previous civilizations, they were neither innocent of theory nor naively spontaneous, as the romanticists, in idealizing Greece, have led many to believe. Aristotle's analysis of art asserts that art is the imitation of nature, but his philosophy of nature is not to be confused with that of the modern era in any of its contemporary forms, such as the romantic, the realistic, and the naturalistic. Aristotle's conception of the nature that is the subject matter of art, is the nature of man, distinct from physical nature, something apart from and above the individual, practically an ideal at which the individual aims. A critic, then, who has something like the Aristotelian attitude of mind, one that finds through observation, imagination, or sheer genius, a perfectly objective understanding of the nature of man—a critic, in other words, whose knowledge of life is somehow nearer the truth than that of his fellows, though that knowledge has not reached him through the medium of the arts—, should surely be included in our definition.

Using the term romantic in a sense broad enough to include the whole of the modern movement with its romantic, realistic, and naturalistic phases, the difficulty in finding a definition would

seem to fall upon finding some common ground beyond the contrasts of those brief periods. The common principle, however, appears more clearly in criticism than in substantive modern literature. Rousseau thought frankly that criticism was a mistake, but once admitting that such things must be, he came to the conclusion that the sensitive soul was the natural-born critic. Trying to judge a work of art objectively is to no purpose; you feel it or you don't. You like it or you dislike it. The essence of romantic criticism is that art is good if it gives you pleasure, for you are, of course, a sensitive soul. Being enjoyed is in fact what makes a work of art valuable; it is no objective quality of the thing. The final test is therefore the first; it is a matter of sensation.

Passing on to the realistic and naturalistic phases of the modern movement, criticism underwent less of a change than imaginative literature. If the truth became the ideal, and later science, the truth was not to be obtained in any other manner than in the interpretation of fact. Sensation was still the basis of knowledge, and beyond sensation there was no appeal. Personality, consistently through the modern era, has distinguished and established critics. They are called, as it were, from among the laity, on account of their sensitive natures and their unfailing spontaneity. Their work and the theory of it has been and remains highly subjective.

Before attempting to discuss the merits of each school something further should be said concerning this rudimentary definition of terms. It may be argued that Aristotle's nature of man, that a thorough grounding in the classics, and that Barrett Wendell's standards of perception, are all in some sense mental, that they exist only as minds exist, and that they cannot be justly said to be objective. The whole differentiation, if that is so, breaks down on the familiar confusion arising out of the attempt to distinguish subject and object.

To the complete solipsist no answer can be found, but to a person who firmly believes that he can be certain that nothing exists besides his own sensations, no answer is necessary or in any way significant, except in the realm of pure metaphysics where we are not, at the moment, lingering. To everyone else,

however, subject and object have some meaning, no matter how elusive of definition, that helps him to get about the streets and transact business. But there are many who, while they are willing to admit such clear instances as the pain that I feel being subjective and the rock that I kick being objective, are quite unwilling to admit, and perhaps with justice, the objective quality of any knowledge or any mental value.

To free the discussion as quickly as possible from its philosophical difficulty, for the same antithesis, surely has its parallel struggle in philosophy and other preoccupations of the mind, let us assume for the sake of argument that the subject-object distinction is invalid as a distinction in kind. It becomes apparent at once that a relative distinction takes its place. The critic who compares a play calmly with other plays is certainly more objective than one who merely jots down whether he found it enjoyable. Again, a critic who refers a work to standards he has formulated from a study of the classics is still more objective. His individuality is never lost, for it is after all his knowledge of the classics, but it is very definitely limited by the fact that the classics have survived not through his personal efforts, and that they have foisted upon him to some extent the judgment of the centuries that preserved them.

Similarly the distinction between the classical ideal of comparison as the basis of knowledge and the romantic ideal of sensation appears to decrease if subjected to a superficial philosophical analysis. Nevertheless the emphasis, the hope, the direction of the classically-minded critic lie, if not literally outside the mind, certainly relatively so when compared with the criticism of self-expression.

Whether regarded therefore, as a distinction in kind or a distinction in degree, there is surely no greater division in literature. Perhaps in its highest forms where criticism finds expression in lofty poetry—such as Wordsworth's sonnet on Milton—it embraces both principles. Such instances are exceedingly rare and need not concern us at present. Ordinarily the classic or the romantic type of thought prevails, and the superiority of the one over the other depends largely upon the provocative circumstances attending its composition.

At a time when literature suffers from excessive convention or when convention is mistaken for form, when the tendency among writers is to imitate the accepted classics rather than life itself, or when literature becomes obsessed with the grand manner and divorces itself completely from contemporary life, then the romantic critic has a great service to perform. Or if brilliance and charm are needed to act against other prevailing tones of the day, the romanticist has his opportunity.

Classical criticism rarely has such fine openings. It rarely has a chance to distinguish itself or to achieve instant recognition unless, for one reason or another, what is needed is a little humor to put things in their proper places. Usually its task is sober; it assigns values; it tries to recognize the permanent and to dampen enthusiasm for what it conceives to be the short-lived, popular success. More than the romantic it aims at the substantive and tries to analyse style rather than take it for granted. Perhaps it is not so sensitive to charm, to the timely, to the colorful, to the work of propaganda, but it is surely more sensitive to form and to the trend of tendencies in literary history in contemporary as well as historic periods.

At the present time in America we receive from our critics no competent analysis of the literary situation. They review book after book and tell us merely whether they like it; they neither instruct the public nor inspire the author. Perhaps the most disheartening of our book reviewers are those who take up criticism as a means of self-expression. Now and then an amusing journalist does appear, but out of the host of them there are none thoroughly grounded in the classics, none reasonably objective in vision, none willing or capable to analyse the full significance of the books they read.

It would be glorious indeed if we had today a few romantic critics of the calibre of Hazlitt or Coleridge, but what we greatly need are critics who know the meanings of such words as comedy and tragedy, who are capable of criticising a book without praising it or blaming it, who can attack problems with largeness of mind and tolerance, and who can focus the interest in their writing upon the works criticised rather than upon the sensations of the critic.

For the situation that confronts the American critic is extremely complex. It would seem as though the victory for the modern movement were complete, as though the last surviving adherents of the older view of life and letters had died without issue. And yet it is more than possible that this is far from the case. Considered in the light of its volume, American literature has today very few if any outstanding leaders to give shape to its development. This or that critic, to be sure, may have a sufficient following to permit him to sell the book he chooses, but there is no literary pre-eminence. It is not unlikely that this unwieldy mass will take shape and American literature will presently assert itself in a new direction. Whether this will be a new twist to the modern movement or a new renaissance, or whether, indeed, a striking development is close at hand, our contemporary critics are surely in no position to judge. They have no standards, no weights and measures, no organized body of knowledge, no foundations in the classics. Nor do they, as Aristotle, think of art as the imitation of a nature apart from physical nature and possess an intimate and extensive knowledge of the models after which art is fashioned.

What they have is a keen sense of fact, a sensitiveness to beauty grown cold through inability to perceive beyond sensation, and a weakness of vision and poverty of wisdom due to the lack of any real controversy within their ranks to stimulate their minds to produce the best that is in them.

Portrait of the God

BY THOMAS CALDECOT CHUBB.

Love is not an enfant terrible, sophisticated at ten, and gay;
At home in the banter of fops and ladies whose repartee is politely risqué.

He is not a puffy-cheeked marble cupid from a fête-galante by Watteau.

He was born of his mother's jade green seafoam all of the years ago.

He has no savor of wellbred weddings with handsome ushers in cutaway coats

And stout dowagers in the family pews with diamonds at their throats.

He has no tinkle of refined gossip, smooth as jammed scones, at afternoon teas.

The west wind has lent him her cool gray swiftness, the sunlight her warning ecstasies.

Fine as spun gold of the leaping waves that lift shoreward and topple and break,

Free as the sure-winged poising seamews with their course in the light to take,

He has the truth of the salty wind that stings the dunes in east-erly weather,

He has the splendor of two bare souls touching the stars together.

On Visiting Fashionable Places Out Of Season

BY CARL VAN VECHTEN.

It is the incredible custom of one unimaginative group of civilized mankind to devote itself whole-heartedly to any one environment for but a few weeks each year, a period which has come to be known as "the season." So brief are these fashionable invasions that the season in one part of the world rarely conflicts with the season in another and some particularly ambitious and vigorous persons, with nothing else to do, contrive to be in the proper place on the proper day throughout the entire year. On the other hand there are those who derive a peculiar pleasure, melancholy or otherwise, in visiting these localities, set aside for the entertainment of the fashionable world, during the months when the smart folk are not there. These poets, these philosophers, or what you will, wander through the mazes of splendours and palaces, with their windows boarded up, whether against the attack of banditti or dust has never been made quite clear. The look, the feeling, of the rich world persist like the ghosts of royalty that haunt the castles of the middle ages, but the village folk, for there are always mere village folk in such a community, become more natural and less inclined towards avarice.

Victuals and drinks, indeed, automatically tumble down in price; so does rent. Carriage and boat fares are subject to amazing depreciations. One is *fêted*, so to speak. The villagers, who depend for their livelihood upon the outsiders but who never unbend during the rush of the season when so much is demanded of them for which they are overpaid, are doubly polite to the straggler during the odd months, which take up so much of the greater part of the very long year. For a year lasts an eternity in such a spot. The stragglers, indeed, help to fill the coffers with unexpected gain; more, they are somewhat of an antidote for boredom, a tiny trickle of excitement at a time when excitement is not expected. They are the surprises of the year. The regular trade of the smart season is received with more reserve, as befits the expected. Tradition, belike, exacts the toll

of reticence in this regard. Paying trade, of course, is paying trade, even in bulk, but when there is a crowded cottage and hotel list to satisfy with food and amusement, it may be taken for granted that innkeeper and shopkeeper alike will greet each newcomer with less apparent enthusiasm.

Through no particular effort on my part, rather by some decree of Fate, which assuredly, however, has coincided with my desire, I have never visited any of these exotic localities save out of season. I have only seen Scheveningen, for example, when that Dutch sea-coast town was a waste of unoccupied brown sand and angry ocean. The celebrated bath-chairs of exclusive design, whose high backs contrive to hide so much of their occupants' figures, were dotted rhythmically along the dunes by the old Voerpad, and, when approached from behind, gave an illusion of a crowd of bathers, but from the ocean side their emptiness was appallingly apparent. The strand exploited no lovely ladies in exposing bathing garments. The weather was bleak, and a Dutch fisherman or two and the wheeling gulls complemented my not unenjoyed spleen. Lunch in the Kurhaus was a solitary ceremony. The vast dining-room with its scores of tables held but me and the waiters, three of whom bore in my *Côtelette à la Joncourt* almost as soon as I had scanned the bill of fare. I felt like Max Beerbohm's justly admired portrait of Queen Victoria, in which the late monarch listens to Lord Tennyson reading *In Memoriam* in a hall of a size which would very well accommodate a Handel festival. I felt, indeed, even smaller than this for, after all, the authors of *In Memoriam* and Edward VII were personages of such portentous importance that the Sahara Desert would not seem entirely empty were they set down in the middle of it. However, unless one is the Empress of India and her favourite poet, one becomes pensive and forlorn in the face of a vacuum, and Scheveningen, out of season, is a somewhat futile vacuum. Did it exist at all? I wondered on this occasion. Surely Tosti's Goodbye was written here in the void Kurhaus dining-room, untenanted save for the rows of tables and chairs and the black-coated waiters.

Nice, in the winter, is frequently too cold for comfort. In the summer, on the other hand, it is usually delightfully cool;

I am told that the temperature during the hot months rarely rises higher than at Paris. Yet no one with any pretence to smartness could afford to be seen in Nice in the summer. There are, to be sure, consuls, bankers, and others of foreign nationalities, who must perforce remain the year there, buoyed up by patience, hope, and alcohol, but to all intents and purposes Nice in July is a bourgeois French village, without the charm and the patina of such French villages as are never crowned with the favour of fashion.

White walls, green shutters, and boarded windows occlude the eye on every street. The life that glows so radiantly in January is quite extinct in July. The ambient palms strive to retain their royal splendour, but, out of season, they manifestly look uncomfortably out of place and somewhat self-conscious in the gardens of the hotels with the extraordinary names, Hotel of John the Baptist and the English, Hotel of Rome and St. Peter, Hotel of the Prince of Wales and Mary Magdalene. The Promenade des Anglais, which is mentioned somewhere in any novel, the scene of which is laid on the Riviera, is as quiet as Riverside Drive on a Tuesday morning. Nay, quieter. And, like the bear in the Arctic winter or the caterpillar in the cocoon, Nice waits, tranquilly and stupidly, for the awakening.

Cannes, which depends so much during the season on white-flanneled English boys for its glory, is even drearier. You will derive no normal pleasure from a contemplation of Cannes out of season, unless it be that you enjoy the view of the mountains which o'ertop the town. But some of us experience a certain abnormal satisfaction in contemplation of such a place in its most grim-visaged aspects. It is with a similar pride that certain women remember that they have seen royalty in its undergarments.

Monte Carlo, I imagine, is never entirely out of season. The passion for gambling, ebulliently and personally, against a throne, as it were, is too strong at all times to be circumscribed within the limits of a month or two. So certain rooms at the Casino are always crowded, even when the Opéra is closed and the owners of the play-cottages and fairy-villas are far away. I have been told by a singer who has frequently appeared at

Monte Carlo that the Opéra is used merely as a decoy. The prospective booker of places is at first informed that all seats for immediate performances have been disposed of and is urged, often successfully, to purchase stalls for the following week. Thus his visit is prolonged and his amateur expeditions to the gambling-house continued, while inveterate gamblers and acquaintances of the tenors and sopranos may have blocks of free seats for the asking.

But in July, when I visited Monte Carlo with some friends, there was no opera. I shall never forget my first view of the principality of Monaco from the motor, high on the Route de la Corniche. The city is set like a tiny glittering jewel of light on a promontory butting into the deep purple Mediterranean. It was night when we descended, and I remembered that Arthur Symons had once advised his readers to approach a strange city only at night, advice which I have followed not only in regard to Monte Carlo, but in regard to Paris, Venice, and Naples as well. We drove at once to a hotel in La Condamine, where rates were more reasonable than in the hotels near the Casino, but still very high. For money is the god at Monte Carlo. There is no attempt at hypocrisy in this matter. He is the great golden idol of the place and he casts his refulgent shadow athwart every house and every street. The more you have, the better pleased the monster, who is accustomed to digesting large fortunes in his capacious maw.

The Salles de Jeu in the Casino are a series of fascinating moving pictures. So long as they are open they form a human kaleidoscope. New people come in but types constantly recur. They have been described in Middlemarch and elsewhere: hard faces and soft faces, young faces and old faces, duchesses and commoners. But on all these faces only four emotions are to be observed, curiosity and greed, hope and disappointment; more occasionally joy, anger, or fear, but these are the mark of the amateur; the professional gambler (and in July there are scarcely any others) wears a mask. He is superior to any humiliating display of feeling. His face never changes. It undergoes no metamorphosis, whatever his fortune. There they stand, these gamblers, a little aloof from the tables, or sit, huddled, watching

the inscrutable countenance of the croupier, as he announces the fall of the ball, or rakes in the piles of gold louis and paper notes, old women with hooked noses and dowdy gowns, old men with gold-headed canes, handsome women in elaborate toilets, doubtless with the insigne of Lanvin, Callot Sœurs, or Redfern sewed within the belt, shimmering in gold and silver brocade, with scarfs of kincab, young men in dinner coats, or young men in shepherd's plaid or white serge. And in July this scene is unspoiled by idle troops of curious lookers-on. Only the gamblers visit Monte Carlo in July.

I determined to see what I could do with one gold louis and luck was with me, for I played for three hours with it, amassing, at times, a considerable heap in front of me, but at eleven o'clock even my gold louis was gone. Then, though fascinated by the spectacle, sordid and somewhat disgusting like all splendid spectacles, from a coronation to a bull-fight, I visited the gardens. The Café de Paris, where I might have nibbled a lobster for fifteen or twenty francs or eaten a peach for eight, loomed opposite. The orchestra was playing; that year it was the *Méditation* from *Thais* and *Un Peu d'Amour*. But you know what Casino and Café de Paris and Ritz orchestras play. The names change but the sentiment persists . . . I lounged along the bosky terrace of the Casino until nearly one o'clock, trying in vain to convince myself that I was not longing to observe a suicide. No unlucky man was obliging enough to shoot himself that night, however, and I finally strolled away, admitting to myself that I was keenly disappointed.

In the morning, hot, white, Monte Carlo in the sun glare made me feel the uncertainty of off-seasons. The honey, which, with rolls and coffee, supplied me with breakfast, was hot. The hotel garden, where I sat, was torrid. A walk in the streets, along the shore of the sea, with the rays of heaven bearing down directly on my head, was almost unbearable. Only the comic-opera soldiers of the principality, in their incredibly gay uniforms, decorated with torsions of cords, amused me. There was a suggestion here and there of the Rue de la Paix in a couturière's sign or a jeweler's window, but there was no spark of life within or without these shops, which depend upon the snobs and the

really smart folk for their trade. The gambler does not come to Monte Carlo to buy Charvet scarfs or Toledo cigarette cases. The resurrection of business occurs during the opera season.

The Italian Riviera is really popular in the summer. Interior-bred Italians seek their own sea-coasts in the hot months. I visited Spezia in August and I should not have found it out of season. The piazza was a gay sight on a Sunday night with its crowd of women, mostly without hats, sailors in white, and gentry and shopkeepers of all kinds strolling about under the eucalypti and plane-trees during a band concert. Nor were the smaller towns without visitors. The peculiarity of hotels in these Italian villages is that the rooms connect one with the other; no space is wasted on corridors. In one such, troops of ladies on their way to the ocean, clad in bathgowns, their children wrapped in towels, passed through my room early in the morning. It was in this hotel that I slept in a bed with the Virgin and Child painted on the head-board and Cupid and Psyche on the foot-board! One simply could not go wrong in that bed.

A city like New York, or Paris, or London is never entirely out of season. Paris might be so regarded in August but all signs fail, for Paris is always crowded with visitors and even a few sly Parisians sometimes creep furtively back to enjoy the ostensible immunity of the month. Nay more, certain cocottes find that it pays to escape from the intense rivalry at Trouville, San Sebastián, or Dieppe, and return in August to the city on the Seine, where there is sure to be less competition.

So with New York, which is popularly supposed to be deserted in the summer, by women at any rate. Some one, on that account, has called Manhattan a paradise for men during the hot months, all the pleasures and none of the responsibilities. The phrase is a pleasant one but now, when a rickey, fashioned of gin manufactured in New Jersey from pure alcohol and a few juniper berries, costs one dollar and a half, almost unwarranted. To be sure, the war spoiled New York in the summer time before prohibition came. One met there then all the silly stragglers, the bounders and bumpers, that usually mess up the Savoy grill or the Berkeley in London, the Ritz in Paris, or who sit in the Café de la Paix, or who frequent Fouquet's or Armenonville

or the Café de Paris. In the bar at the Beaux Arts, in the Knickerbocker (alas, no more), they gathered. One encountered them motoring in Central Park or suppering at the Midnight Frolic. One was certain to run into them in the smart shops of Fifth Avenue or the side streets, ordering stationery at the Japan Paper Company, old ear-rings, fashioned of hair, at the Louis XIV Shop, war-maps, wrist watches, hats with the Coque Feathers of the Bersaglieri at Cross's or Ogilvie's, jugs of Egyptian enamel at Noorian's, Pekin enamel ash-trays and amber crystal bowls for live fish or green salad at Ovington's, stuffs of foreign dye at Wanamaker's, to be cut into divers garments for horse-shows, garments for walking, garments for tea, garments for dancing at the Cascades of the Biltmore, garments in which to read Hugh Walpole.

One autumn during the long war years, chance carried me to the Bahama Islands in September. My ignorance concerning this archipelago was very complete. I knew that they were tropical British colonies in the West Indies and little besides. A rapid glance at books on the subject did not help me much. I do not think there is an extensive literature on the Bahamas; I am certain that there is nothing of any value.

My destination was Nassau on the Island of New Providence, a town which has a season in February and March when it is used, indeed, as a sort of annex to Palm Beach. When the idle rich tire of Florida, an excursion to Nassau is suggested, and the suggestion is usually promptly acted upon.

September is *not* the season. The weather is uncomfortably warm; in the sun the temperature goes up from 115 Fahrenheit. Out of season Nassau is the most uninhabitable, unsociable spot I have ever visited and yet, so perverse is my nature, I am sure that I would prefer it to Nassau in the season. There are about three thousand islands in the Bahama group, some of which are minute and tenantless, and the total population reaches 58,000, of which 50,000 must be black or mulatto. Nassau, the largest city of the group and the seat of the Governor and Parliament, has a population of about 10,000. There are two large hotels

and several small ones and, during the brief period of invasion from the continent, everybody takes in boarders, but there is no hospitality of this kind offered in the summer or early fall. The two large hotels are then closed tight; the only sign of life about them is the stir made in the upkeep of their very elaborate gardens. Even the smaller hotels are reticent about remaining open and the stray visitor to Nassau will be hard put to it to discover a place to live. There are no restaurants and the few regular boarding houses are fully occupied.

After much searching and more discouragement I settled in the half-closed Hotel Nassau, from the balcony of which I could gaze across at two pink stucco houses, always mysterious, shuttered structures, like mansions in a tale by Arthur Machen. Between them a garden, with a banana tree and a palm, and on beyond several schooners anchored in the indigo harbour, their masts a parallel series of straight lines, their sails, half-unfurled, bellying in the breeze. From the top of one the Union Jack was usually flying. Further on stretches of emerald green and sapphire in the water, the colours of the darkest black opals; still further on, the low green line of Hog Island, over which, in rough weather, the surf of the ocean broke.

I had expected to see parrots and monkeys, tropical fauna. They were missing. The three monkeys on the island were in captivity. There were humming-birds, king-fishers, and gulls to make up for the absent parrots. The fish and the flora were assuredly tropical. At the market, a pavilion in the Spanish style, you might purchase anything edible the island offered, from a live pig to an alligator pear. The display of fish was particularly tempting, piles of scaly fellows with scarlet throats and tourmaline fins, and conches, which offered their flesh to the kitchen and their iridescent shells to the collector's cabinet. The fruits and fish were all one could ask for, and yet, in other respects, there was little variety of food. The cows were illy fed and the milk decidedly suspect. Cream did not exist. Beef was imported. Vegetables, with the exception of squash, potatoes, and tomatoes, grow in what are our winter months. There was mutton on the island, and also pork.

The streets, replete with their lazy grace, were an unfailing source of interest and delight, picturesque in the sense that most villages under a hot sun become picturesque. For the sun in hot climes seems to soften every aspect, performing the office of the twilight in the temperate zone. The buildings were all low, usually of two storeys, and they were painted in the bland pinks and yellow that give the Italian scene its gracious air. As in the Italian houses, part of the colour was always worn away, but the bright sunglare, instead of exposing such a condition, softened and melted it into a state very pleasing to the eye. Often a gazebo, protected from insects by screens and from the sun by green shutters, jutted from a house. And everywhere tropical trees, palms, banana trees, the strange silk-cotton trees with their fantastic roots growing in the air, mangos, and bread-fruit trees, flourished. In the upper streets, for the roadways climbed to the top of a low hill, surmounted by the Governor's palace, which elsewhere would be described as a modest bungalow, I discovered handsome residences set deep in lovely gardens, in which flowers and trees were thickly planted. The pink walls surrounding these estates reminded me of Tuscany, but no cypresses graced the landscape, although pines, often grown in monstrous shapes, were somehow incongruously present. Walking over the top of the hill to the south side of the island, I came upon a forest of these pines, slender saplings, with naked trunks, and tufts of green at the top, growing in a rocky swamp with clumps of palmettos, in lieu of hazel bushes, springing from between their roots. If Heine had seen this eccentric forest could he have written his song of contrasts about the palm tree and the pine?

Coming back to the streets, I sought refreshment. There was a club over one of the shops, with one or two rooms and a balcony, where white men played bridge and drank rum and gin, and there were several bar-rooms. I entered the one at the back of Harold E. M. Johnson's grocery. Picture the dirtiest back room of a New York Bowery saloon in the good old days, a few round tables, wiped off occasionally, a few rude chairs, all in a space of ten square feet. The damp, dirty plaster of indeterminate colour peeled from the walls. The floor was strewn with cigarette butts. The air had a stale musty stink. An open door

at the back looked out against an old wall, the ground beneath strewn with refuse and old bottles. The windows, with the shutters half-open, let in the white-hot sun, and a glimpse of white walls. The street sounds drifted in while men in white suits sipped ginger ale and limes and wished they were back in "God's country." You would have imagined yourself, as I did, in the heart of a South African melodrama or even a Kipling story.

Outside the negrescent pedlar women, their heads tied with red and yellow bandanas, over which they wore straw hats of huge dimensions, sat at the corners of the streets, dispensing fried fish and baked breads, small fruits, alligator pears or guavas, heaps of green peppers, and peanuts. Women, balancing huge burdens on their heads, passed by, or men, balancing baskets, in which lay three or four white cocks, their legs securely bound. Occasionally I met a man, belonging to a more leisurely class, in a linen suit. Two-seated landaus, driven by Negroes, and donkey-carts rolled slowly along the glistening shell roads.

Bay street, the main thoroughfare, was a row of haberdashers, shoe and grocery marts. The islanders boasted quaint names. French cognomens had crept in from the outer keys. I encountered a Negro who said that his name was Irving l' Homme. Other common Negro names were Jean-Baptiste, or even John-Baptist, Cecil, Reginald, Percival, Harry, Veronica, Muriel, Evelyn, and Mildred. A saloon-keeper had painted his full name, Timothy Darling Orlando Garrick Elder, on the sign over his door. Insanity, idiocy, and consumption were prevalent among these people.

The island of New Providence, I discovered, was harboured from the ocean by Hog Island, much as Venice is shielded from the Adriatic by the Lido. It was a mile across the harbour to Hog Island, and then only a narrow strip of land separated me from sea bathing, a strip of land plentifully grown with oranges, almonds, eaten green, and guavas, which, when cut and placed in bowls, form a colour combination suggestive of a Japanese print, a delicate salmon pink enclosed in a rind of yellow green. The bathing accommodations on the island were primitive, for the Hotel Colonial offered its own bathing house to visitors from

Palm Beach during the season. There was a cottage where one might secure bathing garments and towels, with three or four rooms for undressing. If your party numbered more, two or three would be compelled to undress together. But the bathing itself was of a sort not often vouchsafed to mortals. Here Venus might have risen radiantly, her nether portions magnified in the transparent water. There was a clear, shining, shimmering, sandy beach; the water was warm and the depth sloped gradually. There was a bay, too, so that, even when the ocean was rough, the water in this semi-enclosure remained limpidly smooth. Those who wished for surf bathing might have had their desire further up the shore, where the breakers rolled in with great intensity. Out of the season, at least, there was no bar here against bathing nude, and many of the Negroes came here for that purpose, although more of them took advantage of the more accessible beaches on the shores of New Providence, those gracious dominions known as Prospect or Labouchere, a mile or two west of Nassau.

Wonderful in their lithe nudity, these Negroes, shining in their bronze perfection; I never could sufficiently admire their swimming prowess. Their stay under water could seemingly be prolonged indeterminately. It seemed as elemental to their natures as the air they were more accustomed to breathe. They were assuredly amphibious. Their dressing was accomplished without the aid of towels, their bodies quickly drying in the sun, and their thick skins were immune to sunburn. At the beaches where clothing was required they did not employ bathing garments; they wore their street clothes, such as they were, usually a shirt and a pair of trousers, and these, too, dried quickly after they had emerged. Like Negroes everywhere, they sang a good deal, even when swimming, but I heard no folk-music. They sang Tipperary, or Good-bye, boys, I'm going to be married tomorrow, and I was amazed to hear one youth—he could not have been more than twelve—whistling the Marseillaise, with especial emphasis on those stirring phrases which underline the words, *Aux armes, citoyens!*

One night, the natives, on request, arranged a "fire dance." This is a ceremony celebrated in secrecy during the season, according to report, when the bucks and their doxies dance naked in some out-of-the-way spot in the woods, if a sufficient purse has been raised to make it worth their while. In the summer the younger girls and boys dance for enjoyment before a bonfire, kindled for lighting rather than heat. The music was furnished by a drum, made by fitting a skin over the head of an empty cask, and beaten with extraordinary rhythmic effect, and by the singing and clapping of hands of the group of bystanders. When the skin of the drum became loosened it was held over the fire to dry taut again. The words of the songs were almost indistinguishable; indeed, they were sometimes mere harsh cries. They were in the nature of

He's gwine round de circle!
Tum ti tum tum tum ti tum!
He's gwine round de circle!
Tum ti tum tum tum tum tum !*

The reiteration was indefinite, until the dancers tired and another tune was launched. The tunes did not vary greatly in effect, not at all in time, and they bore some esoteric relation to Russian folk-song. As in some of the Russian dances, one dancer danced at a time, and he indicated his successor by a nudge in his or her direction. There was not much variety in these dances, which, in their inception, were obviously symbolic of manifestations of sex. They included wild leaps, whirls, contortions of the body, girandoles, like the barbaric Polovtsian dances in Prince Igor. The hands were held at the sides, sometimes with the forearm horizontal to the body but seldom higher. A man slowly advanced, one leg at a time, with a curious effect of lameness. One of the girls danced with a peculiar clawing motion of the hands. In one of her figures, she stooped almost to the earth, continuing her odd rhythmic clawing as she shuffled around the circle of hand-clapping, shouting hysterics. Her thin arms and legs, her angular grace, suggested the marionettes which are used in Ceylonese shadow shows. When the crowd, bending forward, encroached too much on the central space, one of the

* Of course, negroes in the Bahamas speak Dublin English or Cockney, just as the negroes in Martinique speak the most perfect French, but as this is not generally enough known to be credible I have found it advisable to give them the usual stage dialect.

men seized a fiery brand from the flames and with a rapid circular movement singed the bare feet of the spectators. They spread back with alacrity.

But, naturally enough, life anywhere dissolves after a time—and I spent three weeks in Nassau—into something more than a round of street scenes and Negro dances. I passed an hour or two in the court house listening to the English magistrate sentence black boys to hard labour for minor offences. Occasionally I wanted to read and a little stationery shop, occupying the ground floor of one of the little pink houses across from my hotel, was one of the two—and perhaps the better of the two—places where reading matter could be procured. There was, in addition, a local newspaper which appeared twice weekly, mostly filled with advertisements and cabled news from the front. This was supplemented by a bulletin of the war news which was posted every day on the wall of the post office. In the little shop, there were a few stale books (Marie Corelli, G. A. Henty, Robert W. Chambers, and Hall Caine were among the names I noted) and a few magazines, *The Ladies' Home Journal*, of course, an institution everywhere like *John Brown* or *Lillian Russell*, and the *London Illustrated News*. I found a copy of *Vogue* several months old. There were no foreign newspapers to be had except at the library. There the best of the London papers were on file, besides the *New York Times*, and the *New York Herald*. There, too, were the *Forum* and the *English Review*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Century*, *Harper's*, and *Munsey's*.

I enjoyed many pleasant hours in this library after I had discovered it. The building was an octagonal structure with shelves, chairs, and windows in each of the eight divisions. It was decidedly agreeable to sit in one of these, taking books down from the shelves at random. It was, I should say, an accidental library, odds and ends from Government House, left behind as the successive Governors departed, with perhaps a few additions, grudgingly given by townsfolk with a feeble spark of local pride. Still I found books of interest here and there among ponderous three-volume novels with villainous titles by authors now forgotten. Almost all the books were very much worn by handling. Henry James's *The American Scene* was an exception. I took it

down and wondered: Was the book a virgin? Had I been the first? I ran slowly through its vague contents and found Mr. James in a theatre in the New York Bowery (name not mentioned) to see an actor in whom he was interested (name not mentioned). The style of the book reminded me of the ethics or orders of a newspaper where advertising is paid for at so much a column and the cub reporter is not permitted to drag in the names of shops unless they are decidedly germane to the course of his narrative. Still I remembered reading, in a description of a fire on the first page of the New York Times, the phrase, "in the very shadow of Abraham and Straus's." The Golden Bowl stood next on the shelf but I did not take it down. I reached, instead, for William Beckford's *History of the Caliph Vathek*, and for the next two hours I was as happy as ever I hope to be. What better book could one read in a Victorian library in a tropical clime? This supplementary *Arabian Nights'* tale is very moral, for it teaches us that if one yields to the temptations of the senses, he is henceforth eternally damned, but let no prospective reader, who dreads moral books, be deterred from reading *Vathek* on that account. As for myself I was so completely captivated by the quaint naïveté of the narrative, the oriental colour, the afrits,¹ dives, peris, houris, and gouls, the wicked and hideous Giaour, the beautiful Nouronihar, the ladies of the harem in their cages, hung with chintz, *Vathek's* vicious mother, Carathis, who practises cocoonery in her tower, surrounded by negresses, mutes, and serpents, and the wondrous halls of Eblis, where that subterranean monarch, "a young man, whose noble and regular features seemed to have been tarnished by malignant vapours; in whose large eyes appeared both pride and despair; whose flowing hair retained some semblance to that of an angel of light; in whose hand, which thunder had blasted, he swayed the iron sceptre that causes the monster Ouranabad, the Afrits, and all the powers of the abyss to tremble," sat upon a globe of fire in a vast tabernacle, curtained with crimson and gold brocades and carpeted with leopard skins, that I never dropped the slender volume until I had arrived at the final page, where *Vathek*, the complete Manichean, his heart encircled in

¹ Sir Richard Burton gives *Ifrit* as the correct spelling of this word.

everlasting fire, languishes in the lower circles of a Mohammedan Hell. And afterwards, I was not at all surprised to learn that Beckford, after beginning to write the book, had never laid it aside until it was completed, two nights and three days later.³ This was in 1782 when the author, an amateur in letters and an eccentric in life, was but twenty-three years old. If André Gide's definition of genius, that it is the feeling of resourcefulness, may be regarded as authentic, William Beckford was assuredly a genius. Byron admired Vathek; so, apparently, did every other coeval, but fashions change and probably only those who bury themselves in watering places out of season read it today.

The next day I espied a book on magic in this library, and then Howells's *Italian Sketches*, or *Travels in Italy*, or whatever the name of it is, and I turned to the pages on Verona and was happy to discover that Mr. Howells, too (I somehow had followed him in this opinion), preferred the Verona Arena to the somewhat more talked about Roman Colosseum. It is a charming pen that Mr. Howells wields in these sketches and I only put the volume down to read a paper on Greek Music by one F. A. Wright in the *Edinburgh Review*, a most interesting paper in which the writer compares Bellini and Donizetti to the Greeks because they preferred the human voice to the orchestra, and then couples a number of composers with a corresponding number of Greek dramatic poets, Bach and Pindar, I remember, and Mozart and Euripides, Mendelssohn and Aeschylus, Richard Strauss and Aristophanes . . . Beethoven and Sophocles would be obvious to anyone. . . . But now that it is too late I regret the three-volume novels, for there were some titles in this library that I have never seen since. I recall, in this connection, a passage from Philip Thicknesse's book about his journey through France and Spain: "From many parts of the road we had a view of the Mediterranean Sea, and the Golfe de Royas, a fine bay, over which the heads of the Pyrénées hang; and on the banks of which there seemed to be, not only villages, but large towns; the situations of which appeared so enchanting, that I could scarcely resist the temptation of visiting them;—and now I

³ This was the author's boast. Modern scholarship tells us that the writing of the book occupied a year.

wonder why I did not, but at that time, I suppose, I did not recollect I had nothing else to do."

Fortunately, for my peace of mind, I can read three-volume novels elsewhere as easily as I could have in the old Victorian library at Nassau. I can, indeed, by rummaging around in ancient bookshops, acquaint myself with old fashions in literature much more easily than with those in watering places.

In 1795 there appeared in London a book called *The Monk*, written by one Matthew Gregory Lewis, who was just twenty. This romance became fashionable and famous at once, more fashionable and famous even than Mrs. Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which had been the sensation of 1794. Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, (1765), Clara Reeves's *The Old English Baron* (1777) and William Beckford's *Vathek* were other forerunners. Lewis, himself, indeed, in 1804, furnished the work with a successor, *The Bravo of Venice*. These tales, full of rich fancy, miraculous adventure, and fantastic exploits, bide their time well. The colours stick to the canvas in their original brilliance, while the hues of more realistic work, evirated of all imaginative quality, have faded. How pleasant it is to return to their delights!

The rare first edition of *The Monk*, or the somewhat less rare reprint of this edition, without the deletions and emendations made by Lewis at the behest of his father, who found too many references to rosy breasts and nuptial couches to suit his Sir Roger de Coverley tastes, may have supplied its contemporary readers with proper joy, but the pleasure one derives from this enchanting work today, when many an author fears that his readers may be unable to follow him if he takes a journey on a magic carpet, are at least doubled. Lewis made no effort to restrain his wanton fancy or to make the episodes and adventures related in his book credible; rather he plunges the reader at once into a milieu where the Baron Munchausen himself would feel embarrassed. The reader, however, grateful for this ingenuous appeal to his good nature, is ready to believe anything by the time he has finished the fiftieth page, and from then on he dashes

along with the author at breakneck speed, refusing to be unseated by any unnatural phenomenon.

The tale, like *Vathek*, is a moral one, proving that pride goeth before a fall, that those who have never sinned are uncharitable towards sin in others, and that it is easy to be virtuous if one is never tempted, but, as in the case of *Vathek*, no prospective reader need hesitate because of this apparent flaw. Indeed only one reader out of nine thousand probably will perceive it at all. The story is a first-rate thriller in three volumes with a monk as the weak hero and the devil himself as the villain. We assist at the wild, midnight elopement of Don Raymond, the Marquis of las Cisternas, with the bleeding nun, a spectral substitute for his beloved Agnes, while the horses are running away in a tempest in the mountains, or, in contrast to this scene, we are present while the middle-aged Baroness Lindenberg, on her knees, supplicates the favour of Alphonso, a scene which suggests a somewhat similar episode in *Bel Ami*. We shudder, and are powerless to help her, while the beautiful and pious Antonia, drugged like Juliet to simulate death, is despoiled in a convent charnel-house by the wicked Ambrosio who subsequently learns that he has raped his own sister! We are introduced to no less a personage than the Wandering Jew himself. We watch the killing of the Prioress of St. Clare by the mob and we gloat over the sacking of her infamous convent. We are terrified spectators at a meeting of the inner circle of the Inquisition and we are invited to an *Auto da Fé*. The several appearances of Lucifer ("He was a fell despightful fiend; Hell holds none worse in baleful bower below") in different guises, the supernatural machinery, including the magic mirror in its cabalistic frame, enchant the attention and accentuate the beating of the heart. The book, indeed, is written at white heat, with panache, in the grand manner. I will not spoil *The Monk* for those who have not yet read it by unwinding the extremely intricate plot, but I would ask, with justifiable glee, if you can resist a perusal of a tale in which the dread assistant to Lucifer in his hellish machinations, the female arch fiend, as peccant a demon as Catulle Mendès's more modern *Méphistophéla*, in her earthly shape is dubbed by her author Matilda?

Let us, as is so conveniently possible in the pleasant world of books, look forward fifty years or so, to 1844, when Benjamin Disraeli published *Coningsby*, a very fashionable novel, in which the author's avowed purpose was "to vindicate the just claims of the Tory party to be the popular political confederation of the country." I confess without shame that I blithely skip the political chapters and passages dealing with the Malt Tax, the Reform Bill, and the New Poor Law, when I read the book today. I adore to read, however, of the house parties at Beaumanoir, of the lovely ladies in muslin and "rich Indian shawls," arriving in "whirling britskas" to eat Perigord pie, and "pyramids of strawberries, in bowls colossal enough to hold orange-trees," of the ball at Sidonia's palace in Paris, a wilderness of wild bronze Negroes, bearing flaming torches athwart the marble staircases, the ante-rooms provided with ottomans for the chaperons, all the quaint charm of the early Victorian epoch. The young hero, an early nineteenth century Moon Calf, who falls in love with a manufacturer's daughter and develops radical political views in opposition to his grandfather, Lord Monmouth's wishes, is rather wooden, but Lord Monmouth himself, drawn, I believe, from the same original model as the Marquis of Steyne, far surpasses Thackeray's less subtle, if more familiar, portrait. The outstanding figure of the book is the powerful and extraordinary Sidonia, the incomparable Jew, who apparently knows everything and who stands a little to one side and regulates the world by raising his eyebrows. His rhapsodies on his race should provide Freudians with a new Roman holiday, for Sidonia, of course, is Disraeli's ideal portrait of himself. Disraeli's style is warmly redolent of his race, full of mystic extravagance, oriental glamour, gorgeous and grandiose magnificence, with a corresponding lack of symmetry and proportion. During his season, of course, he met with sufficient appreciation, but it seems to me that his later brilliant career as a statesman somewhat obscured in the public mind his very important place as a novelist.

About 1890, coeval with mutton-legged sleeves and the bicycle, there appeared in America a book by title, *The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani*, the author of which was Henry B. Fuller. The little volume must have been fashionable at its epoch for it passed

through several editions and was entertained by at least two publishers, but among the well-read people with whom I occasionally associate today I have found few who have read it.

I should like to lead others by this now unfashionable byway into the mellow companionship of the Knight of Vain Thoughts. The book is written in a tone of gentle raillery, the style is impeccable, and if one is reminded of Max Beerbohm, that fact can scarcely reflect to the discredit of the author, for the earliest volume of the incandescent half-brother of Sir Herbert Tree had not yet appeared when Mr. Fuller's book was published. As a suggestive note-book of the treasures of Italy the work may be recommended, for the ladies and gentlemen who roam through its pages, the Prorege of Arcopia, in self-imposed exile from his island kingdom, because his people will not permit him to erect a marble arcade before his palace, the intriguing Contessa Nulaniuna, the Seigneur of Hors-Concours, the American George W. Occident, and the Margravine of Schwalbach-Schrecken, with her famous false-front, gravitate between Rome and Venice, Orvieto and Ravenna, Pisa and Florence, and the spirit of these towns is caught as it has seldom been caught in literature. The style is very like, very persuading, the irony very sober, and the memory of the intrigues compels me to pick up the book very often, to reread with delight the episode of the Etruscan crown, or of the début of the opera singer at Pisa, or the search for the lost Madonna of Perugino, which ends in the discovery of a Sodoma, or the celebrated performance on the organ given by Pensieri-Vani at Orvieto, or the adventure of the iron-pot, or the final moments in the career of the great Gregorianus, or the Prorege assisting at the excavations at Ostia, or the pursuit of the Aldines, the discomfiture of the Duke of Avon, and the utter routing of the Contessa.

These books have that strange, indefinable quality known as glamour. There are others lying in spots infrequently visited by fashionables today, when it is "the thing" to read Booth Tarkington, or H. G. Wells, or Willa Cather. How much more delightful at the moment to ramble through the no longer occupied shrubberies and labyrinths of Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, H. C. Bunner, Frank Stockton, and Thomas Love Peacock, as

I have wandered through those dead cities which, in their time, have been frequented by so many fashionable feet. Anatole France, in a celebrated dictum, has told us that "The good critic is one who narrates the adventures of his own mind among masterpieces." I would add one word to this aphorism, so that it would read *minor* masterpieces. Now, blindfolded, I pick a chance volume of France's own *Vie Littéraire* from the shelves and run my eye down the *Table des Matières*. What great names do I discover? Paul Arène, Paul Bourget, Léon Hennique, Gabriel Vicaire, Baron Denon, Maurice Spronck, the three Tisseurs, Maurice Bouchor, Joséphin Péladan, Edouard Rod, J. H. Rosny, Auguste Vacquerie, and Octave Feuillet. The good France, you see, did not say *quite* what he meant. Collectors of books (who, by the way, seldom read books) also follow fashions: today they are hot after first editions of Walt Whitman, Lafcadio Hearn, George Moore, and Max Beerbohm. How pleasant it is, in face of these preferences, to search out the works of Cunninghame Graham and Henry B. Fuller, who some day will be as fashionable with collectors as any of the others. I am afraid I shall never be in the fashion; I shall probably only begin to read Joseph Conrad and John Masefield when they are a little *démodés*.

AT RANDOM

In Velvet

BY EMILY CLARK.

There was a curious interdependence between herself and her setting, which made each almost meaningless without the other. For many years I never saw them apart, and during this time they made a picture which more than all others of that period is undimmed in my mind. They were always one, never separate. She stayed mostly in a small sitting-room of her own, but her presence pervaded the large house and still larger grounds. She was of medium height and slender, but with a dignity that never failed in its effect, sitting in a low chair with a curved mahogany back, her work-basket, with its red and green beaded box of needles on one hand and a large leather key-basket on the other. The key-basket, I remember, contained keys as innumerable as they were aged and incomprehensible, and the bottom was always on the point of dropping out. But it had always been a part of the *mise en scène*, and would always continue to be.

More than anyone I have ever known she had an ingrained feeling for obligations required of her through inheritance, a necessity to meet every exaction of her position. This was not conscious, because she was notably unanalytical, but a subconscious determination to keep to the paths already laid for her, even when remaining there required more courage than to stray into new ones. This sense included the fulfilment of all her family responsibilities, combined with an aversion, amounting to a positive refusal, to meet new ones. She was always fragile, and apart from her background one of the most tragically timid people I have ever known. She lived, however, for a large portion of her life on a lonely plantation, with no neighbors of her own class within a mile of her, and even her tenants widely scattered. She knew nothing of business and little of the running

of a house, for she had been spoiled and petted, brought up to believe in her own fragility, almost to glory in it, a survival of the days when ladies had the vapours, and the most dependent creature imaginable. It had not occurred to anyone who knew her that, left with a large estate on her hands, she would not at once sell it and move to a convenient city. But no course, other than remaining there, apparently occurred to her.

In a town house she would not consider spending a single evening alone. At home she stayed month after month, the only white woman within several acres, surrounded by a dark wall of box and a grove of mimosa trees which excluded the world completely, showing at night the not particularly reassuring white glimmer of Eighteenth-Century tombstones in the family graveyard beyond the box wall. Away from home she was terrified both by automobiles and by horses of the slightest spirit, but for a period she drove behind two of the worst-tempered horses in her county because they were sired by one of her father's, she knew their stock to the third and fourth generation, and did not consider making strange animals, however gentle, a part of her establishment. Knowing, originally, nothing of farms, she proceeded to run her own, and dealt personally with her overseer. Shrinking from contention with servants—as indeed she shrank from argument threatening to become acrimonious with anyone—she successfully manipulated the younger generation of them, even to having beaten biscuit—beaten with a rolling-pin, not a machine—each morning for breakfast, when no one else, even in Virginia, dreamed of exacting this. She did not make a point of it, she merely took for granted that it would be done, and it was.

Her friends sometimes wondered if her Ethiopians and their descendants had remained in a bland state of hypnosis since the evening before Appomattox, as many archaic duties were serenely a matter of course here. Among them was the carrying of huge pails of water back and forth on numberless trips to water the seventy-five year old bushes of oleander, citronalis and cape jessamine—known as gardenias north of Virginia—which grew in tubs on the lawn, of a size to make a florist's eyes bulge. These

same Africans adhered to strangely primitive customs of wine-making, for home-made wine had always to be served with tea-cakes instead of tea. The hedges were cared for and the twisting garden walks kept comparatively free of weeds by untrained boys who were no longer slaves, but, once inside that wall of box, seemed unaware of their freedom. But she could be bullied by servants away from home and was pathetically yielding in the hands of alien maids and porters.

She had no vital interest in the Church, apart from the institution which may be hyphenated as Church-and-State, but she was a firm supporter of the village church in her neighborhood, and its rector was always championed by her and made impressively welcome in her house, however dull or difficult he might be. It was with her that visiting bishops always stayed. For the Episcopal Church in Virginia could do no wrong, and its Cloth could conceal any number of sins. Nothing in her house was ever changed after she inherited it, nor was the tall clock in the corner of the dining-room ever for a moment allowed to run down. The first time that I was in the house after her death was the first time that I have ever known the clock still, and the stillness seemed more complete than any other that I can remember, like the stillness of a body that has ceased to breathe. An accustomed visitor could have recognized every article of furniture from attic to cellar in the dark. Many beautiful things were there, not because they were beautiful—she was in no sense aesthetic, except where flowers were concerned—but because they had always been there. Many ugly things were there for the same reason. She did not especially care for books, except the most optimistic of novels, and did not buy them, but she would not have dreamed of disposing of any of those she possessed, not even the Eighteenth-Century London edition of Sheridan, with the signature of John Randolph of Roanoke. Nor did she ever remove the dried grasses from the tall white Wedgwood vases whose like is seldom found even in antique shops today. And the rusty pounce box, with its supply of sand, never left her desk. The box of ivory dominoes, too, with the bright green dots, the backgammon board and the ancient pack of cards whose kings,

queens and jacks had their incredible faces at one end only, instead of both, were always conveniently at hand, although it had been years since anyone had touched them.

She would tell you unhesitatingly that Sir Walter was the greatest of all novelists, living or dead, because her father had believed it, though personally I always suspected that he bored her as much as he did me. And she once caused me a whole summer of anguish by hiding Charles Reade's *Peg Woffington* when I was half through, knowing all the while that away from her I read far and wide, because she hadn't been allowed to read novels of that sort at my age. I was then put through a venerable set of Miss Edgeworth—incongruously on the same shelf—and never knew what happened to Mrs. Woffington until I was nearly eighteen.

Her other subconscious purpose—perhaps really a part of the first one—was that of inflexible amiability, of leaving a charming impression with everyone. She did not deliberately decide this, any more than she decided to preserve intact what, tangible and intangible, was left by the death of her parents. She had probably never heard the phrase "carry on," and there was no definite *noblesse oblige* complex anywhere in her makeup. Everything she did was involuntary and inevitable, a result of what had gone before her. She was supreme in her ability to preserve a smooth surface, no matter what excitement or unpleasantness might be boiling or stagnating underneath. In fact, she consistently refused to look underneath, even for one revealing instant. She had a bred-in-the-bone horror of revelations. Her amiability was so perfect that she would go to any lengths to avoid altercation with a tenant farmer, not to mention her friends and relatives, and would take infinite pains to leave a pleasing memory with any villager. A quarrel between the cook and the housemaid shattered her nerves for the day. She was a prey to bores, they clung like burrs to her skirts, and a drive with her was a complicated affair, punctuated as it was by interminable conversations along the road as to the state of weather, tobacco—on which the year's income depended—horses, Jersey cows and the Episcopal Church.

Although she was a county belle and never married, it is recorded of her, and I for one believe it, that she never said No to any man, however unattractive, and frequently became engaged to men in order to spare their feelings. Feelings have always been sacred in Virginia. While many of her beaux naturally drifted away when the engagements remained merely engagements, one of them was faithful and hopeful for more than thirty years. Shortly before his death he permanently lost both faith and hope, when it dawned upon him that he was not likely to marry that especial lady, and that it was too late for him to try his luck elsewhere. He was, thereafter, unchivalrous enough to speak of her in public with great bitterness. But masculine bitterness was amazingly rare in connection with her. One old gentleman who had progressed from an engaged state with her to a married state of thirty-five years' duration with someone else, came back to her in his seventies after the death of his wife, with no malice in his heart, wishing to be engaged to her again, and this time, he hoped, married. She had austere ideas as to what was due the dignity of age and did not consent, but they remained the best of friends until they both died. Indeed, the marriage of former suitors never interfered with this. No one had ever had a direct refusal from her, or an unflattering word or look to fester in his memory. She was, at all costs—time, truth, trouble—a gracious lady, as well as an apparently helpless one, and so successful was she that there are probably not half a dozen people of her acquaintance who realize that underneath her unfailing sweetness was the grim fixity of an unfaltering purpose.

Tobacco

BY DAVID K. ESTE BRUCE.

"Quoi que puissent dire Aristote et toute la philosophie ; il n'est rien d'égal au tabac ; c'est la passion des honnêtes gens, et qui vit sans tabac n'est pas digne de vivre."

Molière. Don Juan.

Tobacco is an herb so familiar to the children of the Twentieth Century that they are apt to forget how short a time has elapsed, relatively speaking, since white people began to make use of it. In fact, the first mariners who landed upon the shores of the New World regarded the native tobacco drinkers with astonishment and fear. That superstitious awe which has always tinged the beliefs of seafaring men, led those of the crew who had been born in the shadow of Vesuvius to imagine that the Indians were human volcanoes, whose inflamed pigmentation justified apprehensions of a forthcoming eruption. But, as history so frequently reminds us, the conquerors are often enslaved by the customs of the conquered, and the genius of tobacco was soon acknowledged by pale devotees.

When Sir Walter Raleigh introduced smoking into England, he was humiliated by the officious ministrations of an amateur fire-quencher—another manifestation of that popular stupidity which the pioneer must always combat. Fortunately, the extinguishment of the baronial leaf was unavailing. Like a forest fire, which, having been trodden out in one place, pursues its course underground and unexpectedly reappears hundreds of rods distant, the cult of tobacco cropped up here and there throughout the British Isles, despite the opposition of at least one King, who denounced it, in the vigorous language of his period, as “the lively image and pattern of Hell.”

Perhaps the most valuable result of its importation into the United Kingdom was its influence upon English conversation. For the weed, as its lovers disparagingly call it, somewhat in the same manner as the Romans used to placate the left hand by naming it sinister, was, in early days, enjoyed through a pipe. Pipes, however, in the Elizabethan and Stuart eras, were commonly made of fragile materials, usually of clay, and could not safely be carried from place to place. Therefore, it became necessary either to suck smoke in solitude, or for smokers to congregate in some central gathering place. This conclusion was no sooner evident, than an ingenious innkeeper, itching for advantageous commerce, erected a coffee-house, to which he enticed patrons by giving with each cup of Mocha a free packet of Virginia. Thus, instead of taking one's pleasure alone in the home,

it became customary for a wit, a beau, or a dilettante to repair to his favorite coffee-house, and there regale himself with a puff of tobacco, while he glanced over Mr. Addison's latest, or impaled a reputation on a well-nourished jest. Pipes were brought the frequenters of these miniature clubs by the drawer, who kept them in individual racks on the wall, and one of whose duties it was to roll spills and to give fire to obese members. Then, to be sure, there was much good talk, rodomontade, and flourish of phrases. In truth, talking as a fine art really began at this time. Every smoker knows that the brain is whetted, the tongue loosened, and the invention rendered fantastic by the stimulus of tobacco. As one exhales a cloud of smoke and watches its currents and eddies, the imagination goes a-journeying to far countries, and the work-a-day world fades to a distant shore. No Homeric nimbus, in which hard pressed heroes were whisked away by kindly Goddesses, was more impenetrable than the roseate veil which tobacco casts over the face of reality.

But as the taste for it grew more and more universal, the variety of its uses was more fully recognized. One of the most unpleasant features of street life in London had always been the noxious vapors and the unsavory odors to which the promenader was exposed. Delicately nurtured ladies, who had forgotten their smelling salts, often fainted on the highways, and their escorts were forced to carry sprays, filled with orange water, against such emergencies. There were to be counted in the capital,

“Two-and-seventy stenchs,

All well defined, and several stinks.”

The discovery of snuff at least mitigated this evil. Whenever two or more gallants foregathered, there was sure to be a snapping of box-lids, a proffer and acceptance of dust, and emphatic sniffs, followed by sneezes which cleared the atmosphere, as sultry air is dissipated by a thunder shower. The taking of snuff, at first an hygienic measure, shortly became a social ritual. He who was unable to open his snuff-box with a graceful fillip of two fingers, was looked upon as a lout to be shunned by the more fastidious of both sexes. The box itself, moreover, was an index to the position of its owner. Many an ancient fief was mortgaged that its tenant might indulge his extravagant fancies

in such elaborate trinkets. A modern captain of industry will expend a fortune on the purchase of famous paintings, but the old lords of the manor preferred a collection of snuff boxes to the possession of a portrait gallery. So violent was the craze for these objects that Parliament levied a sumptuary tax upon them. The same cure which had checked the mad outlays of Venetian noblemen upon gondolas was effective in the case of their English peers. Simplicity became the vogue, and gentlemen contented themselves with four snuff-boxes, which they changed with the seasons. One of the most renowned exquisites of his age died, it is said, of an attack of pneumonia, brought on by the mistake of his valet in giving him his Winter box on a hot July day.

Nevertheless, snuff at last was outmoded. The reason for this is obvious. No matter how skilful one is in taking a pinch of tobacco, fragments of it are likely to drop upon the shirt front. In an age when perfection of dress was highly esteemed, unharmonious stains upon white ruffles, cherry-colored waistcoats and plum-colored trousers, were much despised. One was compelled to choose between the toilette and snuff. The former gained the day, although exceptionally dexterous dandies, such as George Brummell, continued to be the envy of their imitators by administering tobacco dust to their brains without losing a grain.

Happily, snuff-takers had a substitute to which they could turn. The cigar had greatly refined in other countries; and, despite that its naked appearance was still considered a trifle vulgar finally accepted by English Society. Once acknowledged, its triumph was spectacular, and its popularity soon rivalled that of the meerschaum pipe. Ouidaesque heroes combed the world for their cigars and cheroots, and their tobacco cellars ranked in importance with their wine caves. To this day, cigar vintages are carefully noted by London connoisseurs, and in exceptional years the whole crop of fine Havanas is secured by a few individuals. There are some discerning gentlemen who would be as much upset by a whiff from a bastard cigar as by a teaspoonful of corked wine.

But the standard of taste has been vitiated by the invention of the cigarette, and those who sipped their tobacco are rapidly

being replaced by gluttons. The cigarette is essentially the offspring of haste. In haste it is made, and in haste it is consumed. Yet, certain brands of it are not without merit. A bale of Cavalla will supply happiness for a life-time, and were Occidentals to follow the custom of the Turkish Sultans, in having their tubes made six inches long, cigarette smoking might become a luxury rather than a habit.

Indeed, the proper use of tobacco is not as well appreciated by Christians as by infidels. The philosophy of Resignation preeminently equips Mohammedans for the career of smoking. They sweeten their leisure with the narghilé, the tchibouque, and the cigarette, as well as with sherbets and sage maxims. Physiologists also say that the full enjoyment of tobacco can only be attained while the smoker is squatting upon his feet, and a few Europeans are supple enough to maintain this posture.

It is only to be expected that the continent where the largest quantities of tobacco are produced and enjoyed, should be the land in which chewing was first practised. The chewing of tobacco is esteemed by some a degrading habit. But it must be admitted, even by his enemies, that the chewer is one who renders a supreme sacrifice to his deity. He defies all aesthetic principles, solely that he may partake of the sacred juice. Such devotion is meritorious, and it should also be remembered that many practise in the cabinet what they jeer at in the drawing-room. It is impossible to dismiss this subject without speaking of one of its branches, which may disgust readers who are unduly squeamish. The Science of Expectoration was once as peculiarly American as the throwing of the lasso. Tales are still related in border saloons of the unerring skill of former experts in that field of amusement. The revolver at fifteen paces was no more deadly a weapon in the hands of an illustrious gun-toter than was the quid in the mouth of a good judge of distance. But those who are interested in early American manners should consult those obsolescent reference works, which have been banned by a polite and disingenuous age.

The American Indian has frequently been denounced as a thriftless vagabond. Yet, the impartial student will not forget that although the Indian was civilized by the European, it was

the Indian who taught the European to smoke. And after all, the love of smoking is perhaps the chief characteristic which distinguishes the culture of man from that attained by the most intelligent of other animals.

MISS WELLFORD AND MISS MORDECAI

BY M. D. S.

Miss Wellford and Miss Mordecai came walking down the street,
And suddenly it seemed to me the very air grew sweet.

Four legged legs, four small, gloved hands, two coats with
buttons big—

Ah, ladies never went so fair in powder, paste and wig!

I stooped to their good-morning while my tongue made much
ado—

One gave me, "How is that dog Bibbs?" and one a kiss of dew.

Oh, Time who steals from all of us the life we love away,
Oh, Time who's always whispering, "I take from you Today,"
Stop, stop your weary hurrying, and find some laggard's feet
When Miss Wellford and Miss Mordecai come walking down
the street!

THINGS IN GENERAL

I

Arthur Machen's *Note on The Secret Glory* will shortly be published by Henry Danielson in a limited edition in London, as part of a bibliography, and The Reviewer is extremely glad to bring it out here. It is only recently that this Englishman, who is considered by John Masefield to be without a superior in the making of beautiful prose, has been brought to the attention of America. This has been accomplished largely through Carl Van Vechten, James Branch Cabell, Vincent Starrett and Alfred A. Knopf, who has published *The House of Souls*, *The Hill of Dreams*, *The Secret Glory* and *Far Off Things*, by Machen.

Sally Bruce Kinsolving is a Virginian living in Baltimore, and is otherwise known as Mrs. Arthur Kinsolving. She has recently published two books of verse, the last being *David and Bathsheba*. Frances Newman, of Atlanta, is shortly sailing for Paris, for a course at the Sorbonne, in spite of The Reviewer's frantic petition that she remain in the Sahara, lest more learning make her mad. Reviewer readers are already aware of the extent of her erudition.

There is so much to say about Ernest Boyd, the amazing Irishman, who is appearing for the first time in The Reviewer, that it is difficult to know where to begin or end. Born in Dublin, he was educated on the Continent, was in the British Diplomatic Service, and knows any number of languages. He formerly ran a weekly department in the Literary Review of the New York Evening Post, called *Literature Abroad*. He is now literary adviser for foreign literature for Alfred Knopf and reader of foreign plays for the Theatre Guild. Among his books are *Ireland's Literary Renaissance*, and *The Contemporary Drama of Ireland*. He translated *Les Propos d' Anatole France*, by Paul Gsell, and *Ranke Viljer*, by Gustav Wied, among other things, and he is now preparing the definitive English edition of Maupassant's novels and stories. Alexander Weddell is a Richmond man now living in India. He is United States Consul-General at Calcutta, and is a frequent contributor to the National Geographic Magazine. He is the author of *The Glory that was Greece*, in the December issue. Stanley T. Williams, of the department of English at Yale, is a contributor to the North American Review. Frances Dickenson Pinder lives in Jacksonville, Florida, and has published verse in a number of magazines here and in England. Gordon King has just sailed for England and will write about plays in London.

Thomas Caldecot Chubb, in his first year out of Yale, lives in Orange, New Jersey. He is a contributor to the book pages of the New York Tribune. Carl Van Vechten has just finished the book with the incredible name referred to in October—it is *The Blind Bow Boy*, a cartoon, he says, for a stained-glass window. Mr. Knopf will bring it out in a few months. He is always explicit, with publishers and editors, about his work, and directed

that his Unseasonable But Fashionable Places should be used all in a piece or not at all. That is why it is longer than other people's. We find him the most temperamental of all of our contributors. David K. Este Bruce, another Virginian living in Baltimore, is for the present a lawyer, perhaps for the future a writer, and for the moment taking a vacation in Paris.

ABOUT BOOKS

Reflections On and Of—

BY HUNTER STAGG.

"With four complete years since the armistice behind us," begins an article published some weeks ago in one of the more prominent literary supplements, "it becomes a simple matter to note the vast changes in both spirit and workmanship that manifest themselves in books. Each season since 1918 has but emphasized the fact that most authors of prominence underwent a sea-change into something unexpected and vibrant and that a new generation of writers has sprung up who base their work on wholly new ideals."

This paragraph, brilliant evidence that one thing at least does not change, impresses me as so exactly the right way to open a paper on books that I must borrow it for my own. Why, almost anything might grow out of it—and then, too, passing over the "unexpected and vibrant" in authors of prominence, consider that clause which reaches its climax with the words "wholly new ideals." How magnificently unassailable it is, for however old they may be as anything else, many of these things to which the anonymous author may be taken to refer certainly are new as ideals. One cannot get away from that, and to the thwarted and discouraged the fact should be consoling, injecting as it does new life into all the old sayings about whatever is on the bottom being some day on the top. Only patience is needed, it appears, and only the undeft many whom kindly editors caused, years ago, to destroy their experimental manuscripts and turn from the paths of writing, are hopeless figures now. How frantic they must be today, seeing a flourishing school of writing which makes of sprawling inexpertness itself an ideal, and knowing that, all unaware of their shining destiny, there are even now skulking in shadows seemingly noisome a number of individuals who have only to wait their time—not indeed to come into the sunlight

but to know the joy of having the sunlight come capriciously to them, making them into leaders.

True the fact that it is demanded of people now to write and print things which in a not very long past yesterday they themselves would not for a moment have associated with literature seems to affright some, badly, and to irritate others. But they are the folk who like to ask what literature is coming to, that most self-betraying of all questions, since if there is one thing which unmistakably distinguishes the essential layman from the true *littérateur* it is a concern about what literature is coming to. The truly literary man knows that the trend of literature is the least important thing in the world. He knows, too, that it is foolish to say, as many do, that there is no such thing as a trend of literature. Granted that they never get anywhere, that as soon as you take hold of one it turns under your hand into something else, but certainly trends there are, all the time, and the great mistake is to think that they matter. For literature is like that old fellow in Greek mythology who, when you tracked him down and grabbed him by the foot, assumed in rapid succession a number of extraordinarily horrific shapes and aspects, but nevertheless retained his identity through them all and became, finally, if you refused to be perturbed, as accommodating a creature as you could desire.

Yes, the essential layman is he who cherishes any anxiety about the evolution of literature other than that there should be evolution: he who, if the immediate phase of the passing show offer him, personally, no nourishment, but only the entertaining spectacle, cannot rest secure on the knowledge that a lifetime is too short a while for the reading of all the books already written which would be to his taste.

Returning to that little question of "wholly new ideals," it is at times, I confess, difficult to keep quite clear and unwavering one's notion of what these various ideals really are. For an example I must quote again from the article whose choice beginning I have already made use of—for in it I find the statement, with the work of Mr. James Joyce cited as an illustration, that the past year has been marked by "a spirit of departure from sog-giness, from heaviness, from dullness, from outworn shibboleths."

Now I had somehow been under the impression that Mr. Joyce, knowing his rights, had set up sogginess, heaviness and dullness as his especial ideal, that these qualities, vices perhaps in others, were in him virtues ardently sought for and eminently achieved. And I had thought that Mr. Sherwood Anderson knelt in his own particular attitude of reverence before the same ideal.

It is very confusing, and the intimation that this particular school of writers are in reality warring against the sogginess, heaviness and dullness of life does not help matters much, for in doing that they naturally have to introduce these things into literature, being artists. It is a pity that serious minded writers cannot conduct a crusade against any condition of life without introducing that condition into literature, making it just as bad as life. Since, save for a happy few, satirists have vanished from us, that is the amusing thing about literature, that the evils it fights always become its ideals.

"Outworn shibboleths," or, if you prefer, "frayed traditions," which appear to have received staggering blows too in the past twelve months, are another matter. Now there is a large question in my mind whether there is really any such thing as a frayed tradition. Traditions are usually old, though they become so with bewildering swiftness these days, but need they be necessarily frayed—are they actually ever frayed in literature? Personally, I hope to see some day a condition in which the glib phrase shall be recognized even by book reviewers, who cannot be frightened by the trite, as one fallen totally into disuse. In brief, I hope to see the day when all literary traditions shall be allowed to exist in peace side by side, the value of each being, in itself, equal. And for this reason I was more than happy to see such a writer as Mr. Joseph Hergesheimer, whom even the Young Intellectuals regard with respect, casting *The Bright Shawl* (Alfred A. Knopf) in a form certainly old, certainly well used in the past, and in the opinion of many "outworn."

Now most of the younger writers who are so hastily crowding to the fore—and too many of the older writers, who should know better—would have thought it as much as their lives were worth to offer our so sophisticated public a story introduced through the medium of an old man re-living, by his fireside, an

adventure of his youth. For there is no telling how far back this particular form dates, and the novels and plays which have worn it are without number. But Mr. Hergesheimer shows that there is life in the old dog yet, and the beauty of it is that he did not use this form with any idea of defending the old traditions of writing, or of giving a lesson to the writers who, more and more as the years go on, strain after novelty in form too often at the sacrifice of content. Mr. Hergesheimer knows that novelties in form are not to be despised if legitimate. He has sought them himself, and doubtless will again. But he also knows that any form is legitimate only when it is created in some degree by the story, and not when the story is created—as it too often is nowadays, palpably,—for the form.

No, Mr. Hergesheimer wrote *The Bright Shawl* as he did simply because that seemed to him the one right way to write it, and he knew that any form, however old, which exactly suits a good story, is good enough for that story. Mr. Hergesheimer knew other things too, when he wrote *The Bright Shawl*, that story of a Cuba now vanished, of youthful idealism, and of the most selfless form of love ever known on this earth. He knew how to blend, perfectly, colors gorgeously florid with colors delicate and soft—an art known well to nature, but to few human artists. And he knew, too, how to work without one rude touch in half-forgotten elements, which any but the tenderest fingers would have destroyed.

It was also agreeable to see Mr. Hugh Walpole pursue his way through *The Cathedral* (George H. Doran Co.) in a manner which some have not hesitated to associate with the works of Trollope. This sudden likening, by the way, of Walpole to Trollope will also do much to restore to his rightful position the latter good man, somewhat pulled down of late by copious comparisons with Mr. Archibald Marshall. But to return to our muttons, Mr. Walpole earns my deepest gratitude by continuing in his latest novel to stand among those who are brave enough to pour new wine into old bottles (a good thing, in literature, in spite of the adage) rather than among those who, lacking wine of any sort, contrive odd and striking bottles for the holding of tinted water.

True, there is the trifling detail that, in the case of *The Cathedral* Mr. Walpole's wine is not new, but it is a blow on the right side at any rate. Old wine in old bottles is not to be despised in literature either, and although while reading *The Cathedral* I wondered several times why Mr. Walpole thought it worth the trouble to repeat at such great length that pride goeth before a fall, still an old English cathedral town is a pleasant place to dally in now and then, in the company of vicious deacons and canons and their wives and children, etc. *The Cathedral* certainly offers some of Mr. Walpole's finest work, and stylistically, takes its place among the most pleasing of his stories.

This matter of allotting an equal value to all manners and methods of telling a story has, of course, its unfortunate side, as when some writer crowds half a dozen or so in one novel, wandering happily from one to another, completely oblivious to the value of unity in tone. In his new novel, *Command*, Mr. William McFee does that, almost with the effect of creating a new form altogether, a form the nearest analogy to which would be a patchwork quilt—or, rather, a kaleidoscope, since his story is constantly moving, presenting surfaces new and brilliant, if somewhat small and choppy. Among the many methods of unfolding a narrative, Mr. McFee has but the smallest notion of how to select one and hold to it—he has been advertised too soon, I fancy, into the belief that he knows enough about writing to leave off going to school, whereas he has not even learned the first principle of good writing, which is that no author can afford ever to leave off going to school. Possessing force, vision, and penetration in a high degree, he really knows less about how to employ these elements in the weaving of a narrative than any novelist of his position that I can at the moment think of. For example, in *Command* (Doubleday, Page & Co.), his story will proceed quite naturally for a space, then, suddenly running against a particularly interesting character, it will travel rapidly backward, à la Conrad, into strange lands and among strange people, then without warning dart forward again, only to step a while later into some side path which has caught the author's restless eye in passing. And, too, just as you think yourself comfortably settled in the mind of some actor in the drama, Mr. McFee will

switch—several times in the course of a sentence as like as not—into the minds of other characters who are hundreds of miles away, perhaps in places where the real thread of the story rarely or never carries you.

Yet, in spite of all these annoyances, the book is for many reasons worth while—wherein arises the final, the crowning annoyance, that a book so good was not, as it could easily have been, made fifty times better. True, *Command* is not, in my experience at least, read for the sake of what I believe the story is meant to set forth—that is, the psychological reactions which follow the contact of the lumbering Saxon mind with ultra-civilized intelligence of the East. Set, as it is for the most part, among the islands of Greece, where—Kipling to the contrary—the East and the West do meet, you follow it, in time with complete indifference to their connection with the tale, merely for the sake of the characters themselves, which include sailors in the British Merchant Marine, expatriated British sailors, British and French army officers stationed in Salonika, waifs of the world, Levantine merchants of interesting morality, Greek women and English women. All of them portrayed in an extraordinarily vivid manner, they come and go aimlessly, holding not only the stage for their allotted periods, but holding you as well, quite successfully.

However, one wishes that someone in whom Mr. McFee has confidence would inform him that in addition to possessing a rank profusion of the elementary materials of authorship it is well to have some knowledge of how to make use of those materials.

2

The passage from form to format being a simple business this appears to be a good point at which to mention several particularly handsome examples of book binding which Mr. Alfred Knopf has devised this fall for the sake of certain French classics, two of them—*Germinie Lacerteux*, by the Goncourt brothers, and Zola's *Nana*—being the latest additions to the Borzoi series which already included *Manon Lescaut*, *Madame Bovary* and *Mlle. de Maupin*. Mr. Knopf has certainly spared no pains to clothe all these ladies in a manner worthy of their fame, and his

new editions of Maupassant's *Boule de Suif* and *Mlle. Fifi* are also things to feast one's eyes upon. These last have the additional attraction of being new translations, done by Mr. Ernest Boyd, who also made, last spring, choice rendering of Paul Gsell's *Opinions of Anatole France*. The Maupassant volumes are certainly the most pleasing translations of that author America has yet seen—they would have to be to put new life, as they do, into works so crushed by those persistently analytical and diagrammatical persons who are continually publishing books about how to write a short story.

Apart from these books, the season, which opened so well, seems to have entered in the early days of November upon a stretch or aridity unusual even at this time of the year. A few cases there have been—a very few—May Sinclair offering the greenest in her new novel *Anne Severn and the Fieldings* (The Macmillan Co.), in which she carries on the extraordinary development of her style toward that needle-point directness and concentration which she has made her goal. In another field, Mr. Somerset Maugham provides an unexpectedly interesting book—*On a Chinese Screen* (George H. Doran Co.)—which presents in the form of brief, vivid sketches a vast deal of material which many another author would have mistakenly elaborated into short stories. Achmed Abdullah, indeed, did that very thing in *Alien Souls* (McCann), though there is the consolation that he did it with some adroitness if not precisely with originality, and that he possesses the Oriental's instinct for beautiful language so that his stories of the Afghan hills are not without their passing charm. And what more, after all, can we ask of a book than that it should have passing charm? It is his comparatively recent realization of this fact, and his subsequent abandonment of the idea that he must do something lasting, which makes Mr. Arnold Bennett so enjoyable nowadays. If you like to re-read Mr. Bennett, a good opportunity of doing so is afforded just now by his new volume, *Lillian* (George H. Doran Co.), in which is echoed, with much charm and his usual sure facility, notes sounded by Mr. Bennett many times before, making what is altogether a highly entertaining bit of light fiction.

With the exception of these books, and a volume called

Earlham (Charles Scribner's Sons) in which Mr. Percy Lubbock re-creates in simple, warm prose that is a delight in itself an old English country house and a Mid-Victorian family, if the past two months have brought forth any books above the average interest they have unfortunately not come my way.

Hope for the future, however, springs eternal when one reflects upon the developments of the past few years, for though I have somehow missed that "sea-change" into the unexpected and vibrant which authors of prominence are recorded as having undergone, yet there remains that matter of the ideals of the newer writers. Some people are indeed fortunate in their time—what, for example, would Mr. Joyce have done about Ulysses had he been born twenty years earlier? Some of it he might have written up on the walls of Y. M. C. A. lavatories, as other people do, but for his book he would have unresentfully confined himself to a choicer phraseology, and managed, so far as his larger purpose was concerned, quite as effectively I imagine, though at the expense of greater labor. And in any other modern period save this I doubt if it would have occurred to Mr. Ben Hecht to write books at all: if the story telling instinct had proved too strong for him he would probably have exercised it elsewhere than on the printed page. And Mr. D. H. Lawrence—he would undoubtedly have been at some pains to conceal even from his friends the degree in which he is obsessed by the particular preoccupations which in this happy time he can reveal so fully through medium of fiction. Yes, these are the days of new ideals made interesting by the fact that they are only new as ideals, for it is always nice to see an old friend in a new dress. And considering how many there are still waiting upon our restless generosity, we may possess ourselves in patience even in so dull a season as this, knowing well that sometime soon there will be another stir, perhaps in Mr. Sumner's camp, perhaps in Professor Phelps'—but anyway a stir.

